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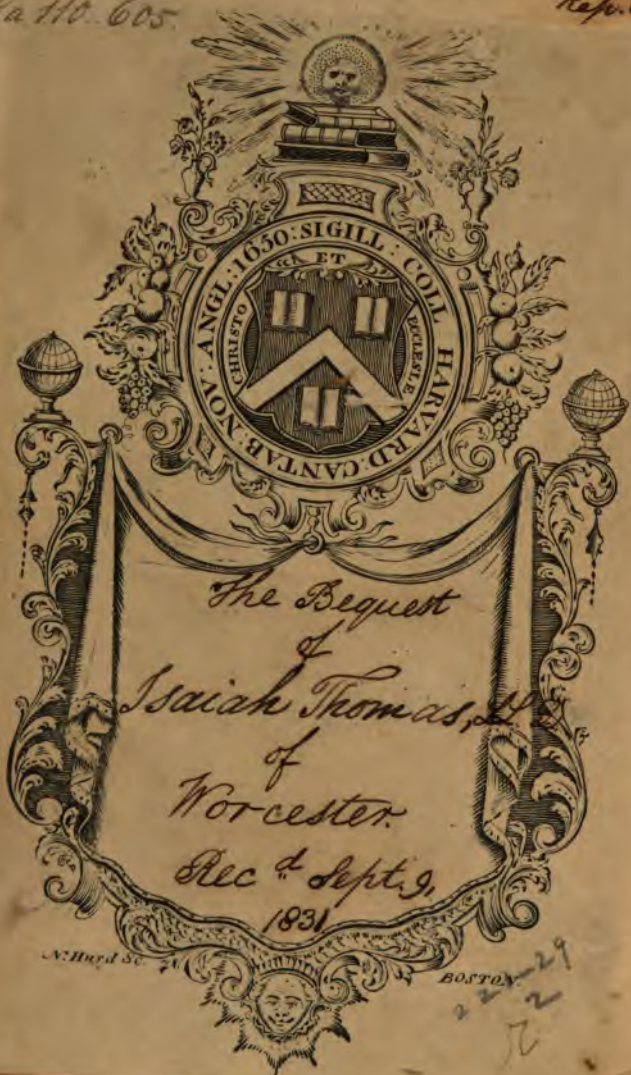


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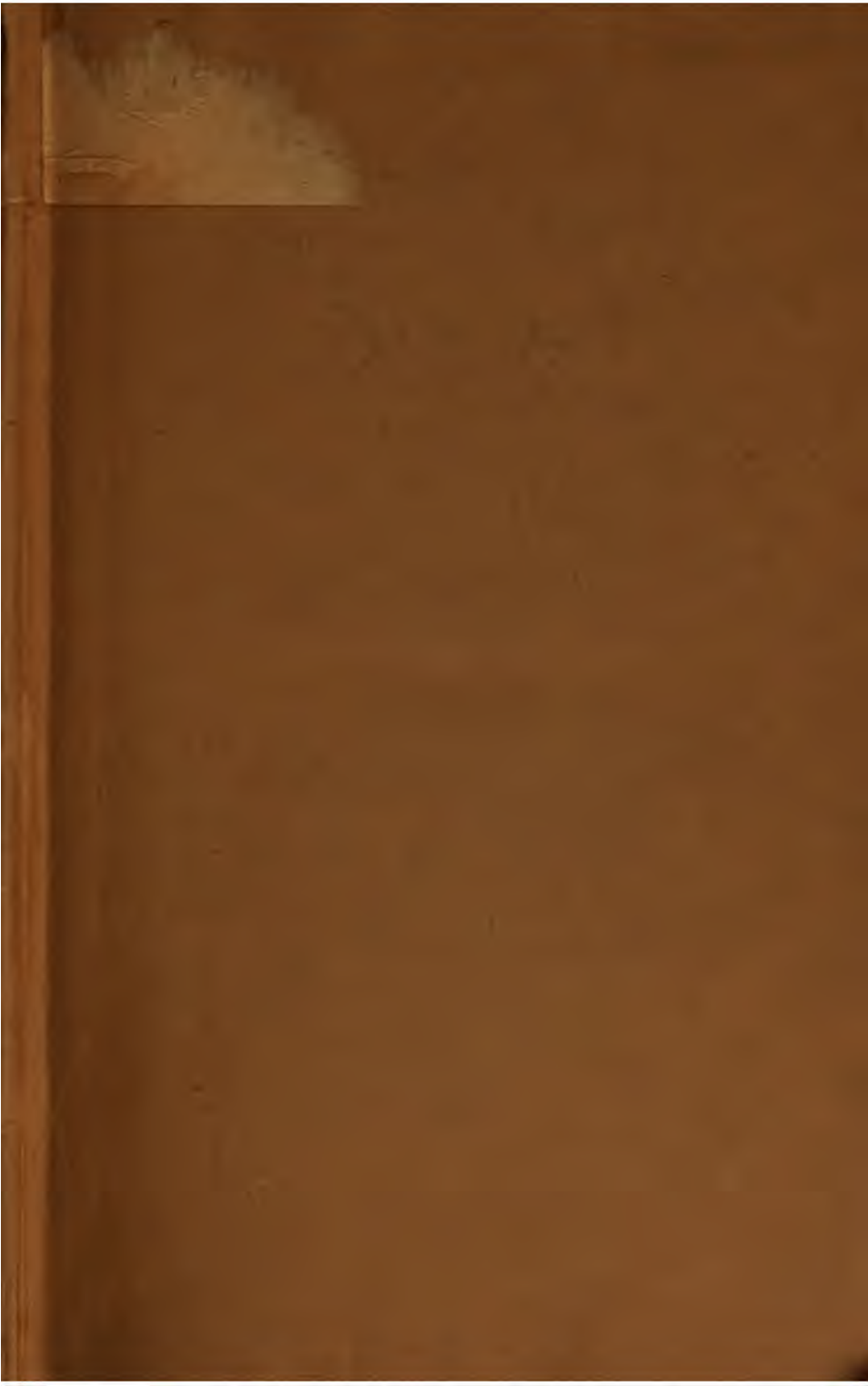
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THE

COMEDIES

OF

ARISTOPHANES.

By T. MITCHELL, A.M.

LATE FELLOW OF SIDNEY-SUSSEX COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

Amongst the rest he cull'd me out a root;
The leaf was darkish and had prickles on it,
And in another country, as he said,
Bore a bright golden flower, *but not in this soil.*

COMUS.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

1820.

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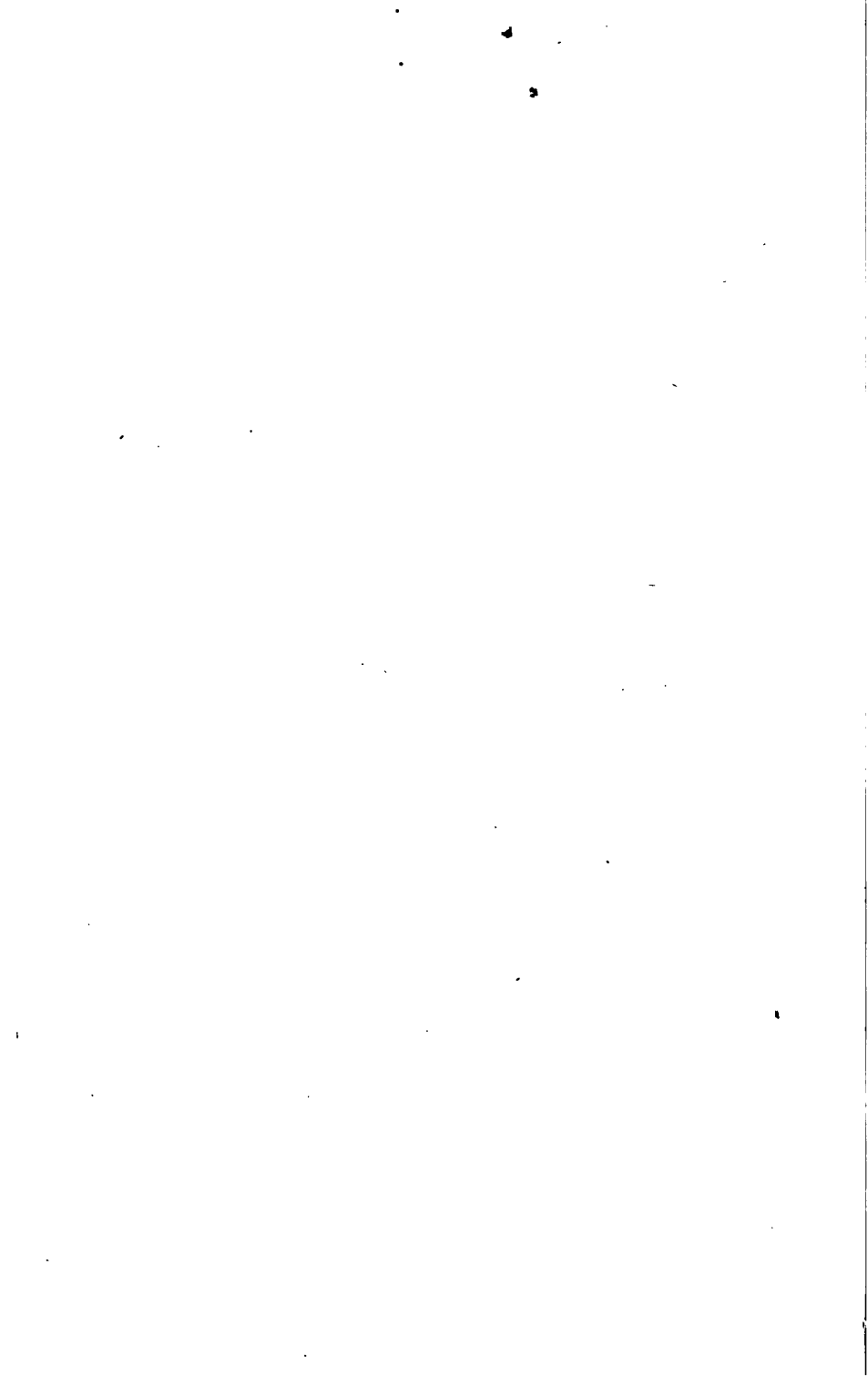
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TO THE
RIGHT HON. GEORGE HENRY ROSE, M.P.

HIS MAJESTY'S AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND MINISTER
PLENIPOTENTIARY AT THE COURT OF BERLIN,

THIS VOLUME,
DERIVED FROM THE REMAINS
OF A CURIOUS AND INSULATED PORTION
OF DRAMATIC LITERATURE,
IS RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,
BY HIS FAITHFUL AND OBEDIENT
HUMBLE SERVANT,

T. MITCHELL.



P R E F A C E.

THE volume, here submitted to the reader's attention, forms part of a work, which was prepared for publication in the spring of 1816. With the causes, which have hitherto delayed its appearance, it is not thought necessary to trouble the public. The translator, however, has taken advantage of the interval thus afforded, in endeavouring to make himself better acquainted with subjects collaterally connected with his author; but the main object, the translations, he has left nearly in their original condition; under the impression, that if any of the spirit and raciness of the original could be caught, it would be, generally speaking, in the first transfusion; and that, in this particular instance of author-

ship, a certain air of roughness would be preferable to an appearance of too intense labour and polish.

The general plan upon which it was proposed to conduct this work, having long been submitted to the public, the translator can only allow himself to say, that he is not aware of having hitherto deviated from it. His great object has been to direct the reader's attention to the text, and to leave his judgment to infer such political lessons, as seemed fairly deducible from it. Whatever notes have been added, have been subjoined with the view of rendering the text more intelligible; and every endeavour has been used to shorten and reduce them as much as possible. Some opinions expressed in the course of this volume, on the moral character of the Athenians, (and on them, collectively, it seemed more proper to affix reproach in many instances, than on the dramatist, whose business it was to paint and to please his auditors, according to their own notions of amusement,) may, perhaps, appear unreasonably severe. But the reader must recollect, that the

complete evidence, on which these opinions have been founded, is not before him; and that the translator, in being obliged to wade through some dirt himself, has been as careful as possible, to let none fall on the by-stander. Perhaps this reserve has been carried too far. The Old Comedy of the Greeks approaches very nearly to history: and "it is the business of history," says a writer frequently quoted in the following pages, "to represent men, not such as they should be, but such as they have been; and thus learning," adds Mr. Mitford, "what they should be, through observation of what they should not be, far more valuable instruction, both political and moral, may be gathered, than from any visionary description of perfection in human nature." The opinions, thus forcibly expressed, add weight to the suspicion, which has sometimes crossed the translator's mind; that in the execution of this work, an unwillingness to uncover the nakedness of a people, whose writers have been our parents in almost every species of knowledge, has influenced him too powerfully, and that a wider

scope should have been given to a species of humour, the chief merit of which lies in its close and faithful delineation of popular feelings, popular habits, and popular modes of speech.

For any warmth of expression, which may have been used in discussing the political character of the Athenians, this is certainly not the time to apologize. Aware, as the writer is, that in a constitution so nicely balanced as our own, any exclusive view of politics ought carefully to be avoided;—yet, when an outrage necessarily growing out of those studied attempts long made to degrade the Crown and Aristocracy of England, and even to assimilate her admirable constitution to that of the democracies of Italy or Greece, is perpetrating in our streets—he may rather doubt, whether he has held up the inward hollowness and rottenness of one of these democracies in a manner sufficiently striking, than a fear that he has exposed her corruptions and her crimes in language too glowing. In the atrocious transaction, which at this moment fills every heart with indignation and horror,

England has, for the first time, witnessed one of those foul scenes, which so often stain the pages of Thucydides, and which make Dante blacken at the name of Florence, in Hell, in Purgatory, in Heaven. That "city of division," as he emphatically calls her, enjoyed no monopoly of crime among her republican neighbours and predecessors; and it was in the fullest sense of this feeling (a feeling which we, alas! can now better appreciate) that this sublimest of her poets, in the full maturity of his intellect, and with such monsters as the Eccelins and the Visconti before his eyes, deliberately reserved the climax of retribution in his scale of guilt for the betrayer* of his master and the assassins of their ruler and king.

The translator takes advantage of this Preface, to express his most unfeigned thanks to W. Gifford, Esq. for the great kindness and attention, with which, amid so many important demands upon his own valuable time, he has cast his eye

* Inferno, Canto XXXIV.

on these sheets in their progress through the press. The delicacy belonging to such an office, (and it is but justice to a man of Mr. Gifford's high literary character to state it,) led him, it is presumed, to be very sparing in his erasures and additions; or this volume, the writer is most sensible, would have been left much less open to remark than it now is.

He begs further to offer his most grateful thanks to Thomas Hope, Esq. for the liberality with which he was allowed to make use of his magnificent and unrivalled collection of ancient vases, for the purpose of aiding this work in any shape, that might tend to make it more worthy of public notice. And though a distant residence from the metropolis, in some measure, defeated these kind intentions, the writer is not the less anxious to express his high sense of the obligation.

It is unnecessary to add much more. This volume is committed to the Public, with the certain knowledge, that whatever may be its deficiencies, they will soon be detected; but with

a confidence no less certain, that they, who are best able to point out those deficiencies, will be the foremost to make all candid allowances for them. To an important part of it, a degree of favour and indulgence has been extended in another place, which the writer was wholly unprepared to expect. He can only hope, that that favour may not be forfeited by its present appearance. For any labour which the rest of the volume may have cost him, he shall feel amply repaid, if it occasionally wrest from the reader the good-humoured Frenchman's concession: *J'ai ri—me voilà désarmé.*

February 28th, 1820.

PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.

THE origin, technical construction and divisions of the Greek Comedy have been sufficiently explained in the works of several popular writers : the Lectures of Blair, the Observer of Cumberland, and Brumoy's Théâtre des Grecs affording satisfactory references for those readers, who want information on any or all of these topics. The purport and bearings of that particular branch of it, known by the name of the OLD COMEDY, with the views and character of the person who carried it to its greatest height, have recently been discussed by two most distinguished scholars and brothers, whose works are in the hands of every man of letters, and whose critical opinions are now received with deference and respect, throughout Europe. The Messrs. Schlegels have placed the great comic poet of antiquity on a ground high indeed, but on a ground, which every scholar, intimately acquainted with his writings, will allow to be no

more than his due.* Had these two critics offered a clue for ascertaining the reasons, by which this extraordinary

* "If we would judge of Aristophanes as a writer and as a poet," says M. F. Schlegel, (and his remarks, exclusively of their own merit, require insertion, as forming the groundwork of what is here offered,) "we must transplant ourselves freely and entirely into the age in which he lived. In the modern ages of Europe it has often been made the subject of reproach against particular nations or periods, that literature in general, but principally the poets and their works, have too exclusively endeavoured to regulate themselves according to the rules of polished society, and, above all, the prejudices of the female sex. Even among those nations, and in those periods which have been most frequently charged with this fault, there has been no want of authors who have loudly lamented that it should be so, and asserted and maintained, with no inconsiderable zeal, that the introduction of this far-sought elegance and gallantry, not only into the body of literature as a whole, but even into those departments of it where their presence is most unsuitable, has an evident tendency to make litera-

ture tame, poor, uniform, and unmanly. It may be that there is some foundation for this complaint: the whole literature of antiquity, but particularly that of the Greeks, lies open to a reproach of an entirely opposite nature. If our literature has sometimes been too exclusively feminine, theirs was at all times uniformly and exclusively masculine, not unfrequently of a nature far more rough and unpolished than might have been expected from the general intellectual character and refinement of the ancients."

After a few brief remarks on the degraded state of female society in Greece, and the baneful effect it had upon Grecian literature, M. Schlegel proceeds—

"Here, where we are treating of the decline of Grecian manners, and of the writer who has painted that decline the most powerfully and the most clearly—the consideration of this common defect of antiquity has, I imagine, been not improperly introduced. But when this imperfection has once been distinctly recognized, as one the reproach of which affects in justice not the individual writers, but ra-

writer came so rudely into contact with a contemporary still more extraordinary, a volume which attempts to give some

ther the collective character, manners, and literature of antiquity; it were absurd to allow ourselves to be any longer so much influenced by it, as to disguise from ourselves the great qualities often found in combination with it in writings which are altogether invaluable to us, both as specimens of poetical art, and as representations of the spoken wit of a very highly refined state of society; to refuse, in one word, to perceive in Aristophanes the great poet which he really is. It is true that the species and form of his writing—if indeed that can be said with propriety to belong to any precise species or form of composition—are things to which we have no parallel in modern letters. All the peculiarities of the Old Comedy may be traced to those deifications of physical powers, which were prevalent among the ancients. Among them, in the festivals dedicated to Bacchus and the other frolicsome deities, every sort of freedom, even the wildest ebullitions of mirth and jollity were not only things permitted, they were strictly in character, and formed, in truth, the consecrated ceremonial of the

season. The fancy, above all things, a power by its very nature impatient of constraint, the birth-right and peculiar possession of the poet, was on these occasions permitted to attempt the most audacious heights, and revel in the wildest world of dreams, loosened for a moment from all those fetters of law, custom, and propriety, which at other times, and in other species of writing, must ever regulate its exertion even in the hands of poets. The true poet, however, at whatever time this old privilege granted him a Saturnalian licence for the play of his fancy, was uniformly impressed with a sense of the obligation under which he lay, not only by a rich and various display of his inventive genius, but by the highest elegance of language and versification, to maintain entire his poetical dignity and descent, and to shew, in the midst of all his extravagances, that he was not animated by prosaic petulance, nor personal spleen, but inspired with the genuine audacity and fearlessness of a poet. Of this there is the most perfect illustration in Aristophanes. In language and versification his excellence is

faint idea of his works by translation, might commence its labours without any additional demand on the reader's

not barely acknowledged—it is such as to entitle him to take his place among the first poets to whom Greece has given birth. In many passages of serious and earnest poetry, which (thanks to the boundless variety and lawless formation of the popular comedy of Athens) he has here and there introduced, Aristophanes shews himself to be a true poet, and capable, had he so chosen, of reaching the highest eminence even in the more dignified departments of his art.

“ This might be abundantly sufficient, not indeed to represent Aristophanes as a fit subject of imitation, for that he can never be, but to set his merit as a poet in its true light. But if we examine into the use which he has made as a man, but more particularly as a citizen, of that liberty which was his poetical birthright, both by the manners of antiquity, and by the constitution of his country, we shall find many things which might be said still further in his vindication, and which cannot indeed fail to raise him personally in our esteem. His principal merit, as a patriot, consists in the fidelity with

which he paints all the corruptions of the state, and in the chastisement which he inflicts on the pestilent demagogues who caused that corruption or profited by its effects. The latter duty was attended with no inconsiderable danger in a state governed by a democracy, and during a time of total anarchy; yet Aristophanes has performed it with the most fearless resolution. It is true that he pursues and parodies Euripides with unrelenting severity; but this is perfectly in character with the old spirit of merciless enmity which animated all the comic poets against the tragedians; and it is impossible not to perceive that not only the more ancient Æschylus, but even his contemporary Sophocles, is uniformly mentioned in a tone altogether different, in a temper moderate and sparing; nay, very frequently, with the profoundest feelings of admiration and respect. *It forms another grievous subject of reproach against Aristophanes, that he has represented in colours so odious, Socrates, the most wise and the most virtuous of all his fellow-citizens; it is, however, by no means improbable that this was not the effect of mere po-*

patience. This however the Messrs. Schlegels have not done, and room is still left for discussing, how it happened that the wisest and the wittiest man of Athens were made to jostle so roughly against each other. At this distance of time it cannot be expected that materials should be found for setting the subject completely at rest ; and indeed, when we consider how* lately and with what difficulty one of the brightest ornaments of our own literature has been rescued from the calumnies of ignorance, misrepresentation, and malevolence, we may demand to be excused, if after all our researches, some disputed points of relationship between a poet and a philosopher of two thousand years back, remain still unexplained. Disquisitions, however, of this kind are never without their use ; besides their own intrinsic importance, they often serve, like Selden's straws, to shew how the wind blows in some of the most important topics, which belong to all ages and countries, and which can never

etical wantonness ; but that Aristophanes selected, without any bad intention, that first and best of illustrious names, that he might, under it, render the Sophists as ridiculous as they deserved to be, and as foolish and worthless in the eyes of the people as he could make them. The poet, it is not unlikely, in his own mind, mingled and confounded, even without wishing it, this inestimable

sage with his enemies the sophists, whose schools he frequented in his maturer years, solely with the view of making himself master of that which he intended to refute and overthrow." Lectures on the History of Literature, pp. 57—62.

* See the interesting Preface to Mr. Gifford's edition of Ben Jonson's Works.

be brought under review too often. It will be taken then for granted, that the reader is acquainted with some of the leading differences between the scenic representations of the Greeks and our own. He will be supposed to know, that the dramas of that people grew out of and formed part of their religious ceremonies—that they were exhibited in theatres of a colossal size compared with ours—that the *times of exhibition were at distant intervals—that when those few intervals did take place, the whole day was devoted to theatrical entertainments—that a prize was conferred on the most successful competitor—and that a piece once performed, was never, in the same shape at least, represented a second time. He will further be supposed to have some knowledge of the general principles of that peculiar part of the ancient drama, the OLD COMEDY, as it is called, in contradistinction to what was afterwards named the MIDDLE, and the NEW ;—as that it stood in the extreme relation of contrariety and parody to the tragedy of

* Those who wish to enter into the disputes of the learned on the times and places, when and where theatrical entertainments were exhibited at Athens, may consult Beck's excellent Commentaries, v. ii. p. 144. and v. iii. p. 12. It will be sufficient for the present purpose to mention the Spring and Autumnal Festivals of Bacchus, as

being the seasons most particularly devoted to those amusements. Authors generally reserved their pieces for the former Festival, as Athens was at that time crowded with strangers, the allies or tributaries of that imperious metropolis, and the theatres were not then confined, as at other times, exclusively to the natives of Attica.

the Greeks—that it was directed chiefly to the lower* orders of society at Athens—that it served in some measure the purposes of the modern Journal, in which public measures and the topics of the day might be fully discussed; and that in consequence the *dramatis personæ* were generally the poet's own contemporaries, speaking in their own names, and acting in masks, which, as they bore only a caricature resemblance of their faces, shewed that the poet in his observations upon them did not mean to be taken literally to his expression. Like tragedy, it constituted part of a religious ceremony; and the character of the deity, to whom it was more particularly dedicated, was stamped at times pretty visibly upon the work which was composed in his honour. The † Dionysian festivals, in short, were the great Carnivals of antiquity—they celebrated the returns of

* Besides internal evidence, many expressions of Aristotle and Plato might be quoted to this effect. The latter, indeed, goes so far, as to rank, in his Treatise on Legislation, (lib. ii. p. 578. editio Mars. Ficini.) the performance of the comic theatre as only one degree above jugglers' tricks. Puppet-shows and jugglers' tricks, he there observes, are best adapted to the taste of boys—comedy to that of growing lads—and tragedy to that of young men, and the bet-

ter classes of women. Elder men were to find their entertainment in the recitations of the Rhapsodists. We are not to take Plato's word too strictly on this occasion. Between the philosophers and the comic writers there was always open war; and Plato, who at any rate felt no scruple in borrowing pictures and images from Aristophanes, returned the obligation by indulging in some open and a little more covert abuse of his writings.

† A sort of Dionysian Festival

vernal festivity or the joyous vintage, and were in consequence the great holidays of Athens—the seasons of universal relaxation. The comic poet was the high priest of the festival; and if the orgies of his divinity (the God of Wine) sometimes demanded a style of poetry, which a Father of our Church probably had in his eye, when he called all poetry the *devil's wine*, the organ of their utterance (however strange it may seem to us) no doubt considered himself as perfectly absolved from the censure which *we* should bestow on such productions: in their composition he was discharging the same *pious* office as the painter, whose duty it was to fill the temples of the same deity with *pictures, which our imaginations would consider

is still observed once every four years, in the neighbourhood of Vevay,—that scene of “Recollections” and of natural beauties,—to which the muse of Lord Byron alone could do justice. It was a great mortification to the writer of these notes to be there about the time of its celebration, and to find that the distresses of the times did not admit of its being observed as usual.

* The indulgence granted to this abuse in the time of Aristotle may be seen in the Seventh Book of his Politics, c. 17. As this Discourse has been almost entirely confined

to the precise period of the representation of the Clouds, this reference to a later writer would not have been made, had not a curious passage in the Hippolytus of Euripides (v. 1003.) justified us in taking it for granted, that the custom was as prevalent in the days of Aristophanes as it was in the time of Aristotle. Good taste, as well as other considerations, requires that this part of our subject should be dismissed as hastily as possible; but the usages of a large (and that too the most enlightened) portion of antiquity, cannot be altogether passed over in silence; and it is of

equally ill suited to the habitations of divinity. What religion therefore forbids among us, the religion of the Greeks

importance to shew, that the value, so justly due to a great part of the Aristophanic writings, does not deserve to be impugned from a mistaken supposition, that he stood single among his countrymen, in the use of such language, and allusions, as would be revolting in their display to modern feelings, whatever excuse may be found for them in our knowledge of the manners of antiquity. The Greek Comedy (according to the express testimony of Aristotle, in *Poeticis*, § 11.) grew out of the Phallic Hymn, as the Greek Tragedy was merely an improvement upon the Dithyrambic Hymn; and if the tragedian could not wholly rescue his drama from the god of the vintage and his fantastic attendants the Satyrs, (as many low scenes and much snappish dialogue, clear proofs of the origin of Greek tragedy, sufficiently testify,) we may be very sure, that an entire departure from the canons, which regulated the construction of the Phallic Hymn, would not be tolerated in a comic poet. There is authority, in fact, for asserting, that the consequences were fatal

to one of the Greek dramatists, who presumed to put his own good taste on this point too violently in opposition with the taste of his audience. If Comedy too looked to the *Margeites* of Homer for an example, on which to model herself, as her sister muse did to his *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, enough of that poem remains in tradition (vide Suidam in voce *Μαργιτις*) to shew what kind of humour would be required as the predominant article. But the usages of common life among the Greeks form the completest apology for the aberrations of the Greek stage. Let the reader open any of the volumes of the "*Antiquités d'Herculanum*," and see what objects daily met the eyes of men and women both at home and abroad, and he will have little reason to be surprised at any freaks, which the gay Muse of Comedy might allow herself during the permitted licence of the Dionysian festivities. How much of this proof of simplicity or depravity in the ancients (for vehement advocates have been found for both opinions) is to be attributed to the sources from which

did not merely tolerate, but enjoin. Nor was the extreme and even profane gaiety of the OLD COMEDY without its excuse. To unite extravagant* mirth with a solemn seriousness was enjoined by law, even in the sacred festival of Ceres. The feast of Bacchus retained the licence without the embarrassment of the restraint. While the philosophers,† therefore, querulously maintained, that man was

the Greek mythology was derived—to oriental traditions received through the medium of Egypt, we must leave to the antiquarians to decide. But it may be thrown out as a fair conjecture, that the mysterious phallic emblem, which made so important a part in the religious ceremonies of Greece, and the σκυτινον πικρ, which was in consequence so frequently introduced upon the stage, were mere substitutions, according to the genius of the Greeks, for the lingam or passive generating principle of the Hindoos.—See Quarterly Rev. No. I. Article on the Sanscrita language—Asiatic Researches—Maurice's Indian Antiquities—Discours Préliminaire du Zend-Avesta de M. Anquetil—St. Augustin de Civitate Dei—Maimonides de Idol.—Lucian de Syriâ Deâ—Buchanan's Christian Researches—Nordische Beyträge and Professor Pallas's Remarks on the Idolatry of the Indian Merchants of Astra-

chan—and the Antiquités d'Herculanum.,

* Πολλά μὲν γέλοια εἰ-

πειν, πολλά δὲ σπουδαία. Arist.

in Ranis. 389. From a similar custom regulating the Saturnalia of the Romans, the Emperor Julian feels it necessary, in his Lives of the Cæsars, (a *jeu d'esprit* evidently modelled upon the Old Comedy,) to apologize for not being quite so lively as the season required. The Greeks, who gave a reason for every thing, were not without a philosophical apology for this mixture of mirth and seriousness, even on occasions where we should think them somewhat incompatible. *Αὐτοὶ γὰρ γέλοιον τὰ σπουδαία καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐναντίων τὰ ἐναντία μαθεῖν ἢ δυνατόν, εἰ μέλλει τις φρονιμὸς εἶσθαι.* Plat. de Leg. lib. vii.

† Plato de Leg. lib. vii. p. 633. F. lib. i. 573. C. *Di nos quasi pilas habent.* Capt. Plauti, in Prologo.

the joke and plaything of the gods, the comic poet reversed the picture, and made the gods the plaything of men: in his hands indeed every thing was upon the broad grin; the gods laughed, men laughed, animals laughed. Nature was considered as a sort of fantastic being, with a turn for the humorous, and the world was treated as a sort of extended jest book, where the poet pointed out the *bons-mots*, and acted in some degree as corrector of the press. If he discharged this office sometimes in the sarcastic spirit of a **Mephistophilus*, this too was considered as a part of his functions: he was the *Terræ-Filius* of the day, and

* In the *Faust* of Goëthe, and in that work only of all modern productions, some idea may be formed of the rich harmonies and splendid versification of Aristophanes. The power which the German language has of approximating to the more simple of the Grecian metres, and of adding to that power the fullest richness of modern rhyme, makes it doubtful to the ear, which of the two writers ought to be preferred;—were the Athenian read with his proper accentuation, there would perhaps be no doubt on the subject. There are other points of relation between these two writers, besides those of versification. To the great and overwhelming tragic powers of

Goëthe, Aristophanes, of course, can make no pretension: but in their preference of the arbitrary comic to the comic of manners, the two writers come very close together; and both writers should have lived, as *Mad. de Staël* expresses it, when there was an intellectual chaos, similar to the material chaos. Had Aristophanes written in modern times, it is, perhaps, not impertinent to suggest, that the “*Auerbach’s Keller in Leipzig*,” the *Hexenküche*, the *Walpurgisnacht*, and perhaps the quizzing scene with the young student, just fresh from his university, are precisely the sort of scenes which would have fallen from his pen.

lenity would have been considered, not as an act of discretion, but as a cowardly dereliction of duty.

Of the species of comedy thus described, whoever was the inventor, whether *Epicharmus or Phormis, Aristophanes was the great finisher and perfecter. With an ear tuned to the nicest modulations of harmony, and with a temperament apparently most joyous and jovial, he was just fitted for the entertainment of a people, of whom Philip of Macedon, when he compared them to the †Hermaic statues, so common in their streets, drew in a few words one of the most happy and characteristic descriptions of a people, which is upon record. That gaiety which is so well adapted to a nation of quick natural parts, and which has so few charms for persons of cultivated understandings, the gaiety which consists‡ in painting pleasantly the dulness of the understanding (*la bêtise*) and in inspiring buffoonery; of that gaiety, which has been made equally the basis of Italian and Grecian comedy, Aristophanes was pre-eminently the master. Music, dancing, metre, decoration—all that union of amusement, which the Greeks, a *seeing* and not a *reading* public, (this fact cannot be too much in our minds, when we are talking of their dramatic literature,) re-

* Arist. de Poet. lib. i. § 11.

iv. i. p. 120. See also Diog. Laert.

† Φιλίππος τῆς Ἀθηναίας εἰκάζει τοῖς

lib. v. § 82.

Ἑρμαῖς, ὡς στομα μόνον ἔχουσι καὶ αἰδοῖα
μυγαλα. Stobæi Serm. edit. Schow.

‡ Littérature du Midi, tom. ii.
p. 367.

quired of their writers for the stage, Aristophanes seems to have improved ;* the muse of Comedy herself he left as he found her—a beautiful Titania, matchless in her outward proportions, but with a spell upon her affections, and showering favours, which should have been better bestowed—upon an ass's head, with Bottom, the weaver, below it. An utter aversion to every species of affectation,† and a most splenetic hatred to Euripides, (derived from deeper‡ views of things, than people have generally given the comedian credit for,) perhaps guided Aristophanes on this point. He found that poet, half-pleader and half-bard, as he contemptuously § calls him, affecting to rescue the sister muse of tragedy from the coarse || hands of Æschylus, under whom she had been pampered into a sort of cumbrous

* He particularly reformed the Cordax or dance of Comedy, which, however, in the time of Theophrastus, seems to have relapsed into its former state of indecorousness. See the sixth of those inimitable Characters which he has left us.

† “On a si peur,” says a writer, who turns up some great truth at every step she makes, “de rencontrer l'affectation dans le plus beau don du ciel, dans la sensibilité, que l'on préfère quelquefois la

rudesse elle-même, comme garant de la franchise.” *De l'Allem.* t. ii. p. 138.

‡ It is probably with a reference to this part of the character of Aristophanes, that Rabelais, whose observation was as acute as his erudition was prodigious, makes him a “lantern of honour” in his allegorical kingdom of wisdom, and joins him in office with Cleanthes the philosopher. *L. v. c. 33.*

§ In Pace, v. 534.

|| In Ranis, v. 939.

ostentatious Amazon. A course of straight-lacing and cool diet was bringing her a little more into compass : her appearance had already become more genteel, and only a little more polish was necessary to fit her for the society of the Sophists, to whose schools she continually resorted for the little prettinesses, and affectations and delicacies of thought and expression, which were for ever in her mouth. A rough hand and a good course of bark and steel were necessary to repair the spreading mischief and infection. The puns of the *Peiræus, and the proverbs of the †Agora, and the

* We are apt to forget that Athens was the greatest maritime power of antiquity ; but Aristophanes, a consummate politician amid all his buffoonery, knew perfectly well where her real strength lay ; he therefore takes every occasion of paying court to the naval part of his audience, the “ nautic multitude,” as Xenophon calls them, and advocates their rights upon all occasions. How much Plato and he were at variance upon this point, see the fourth book of his Legislation. Aristotle coincides with the poet, *De Rep.* l. vii. c. 6. The learned reader will remember various passages of Xenophon and Isocrates, expressing their respective opinions on this important topic.

† The Agora was the public place of the Greeks, which, however, differed very considerably from the Forum of the Romans, the substitute generally given for it. This substitution of Roman terms for Grecian, has occasioned a great deal of confusion in the minds of readers. Works of humour cannot safely dispense with them : for humour must be excited by appealing to ideas already resident in the mind, as there must be material ready to receive the sparks elicited from flint in order to create a flame. Writers upon serious subjects are not so tied by their subjects, and an appeal may be made to scholars, whether it is not time, that the mythologies of the two great nations of antiquity

coarse jokes of the *Ecclesia* and *Heliaæa* were therefore diligently collected and culled, and showered from a full cornucopia, in all their native richness and strength upon an audience, who must have found in them a charm, of which we are wholly unsusceptible. Perhaps, too, it added some charm to their value, in the eyes of democratical pride and vanity, that it was a man of rank and *property (for Aristophanes was both) who thus condescended to amuse his audience according to their own notions of pleasantry and humour.

Till the fatal exhibition therefore of the *Clouds*, the dramatic career of Aristophanes had been short, but eminently successful. His first play, (the *Dætales*,) which was brought out before the author had reached the age established by law,† we know to have been received with the most flattering attention: his “*Babylonians*” could boast

should be kept more distinct by the introduction of a Zeus, a Poseidon, and a Chronus, as well as a Jupiter, a Neptune, and a Saturn.

* Mit. Hist. of Greece, vol. iii. p. 327. Arist. in *Achar.* v. 653, 4.

† Wieland, in the notes to his translation of the “*Clouds*,” quotes the authority of the Scholiast for saying, that there is an uncertainty whether the legal age for exhibiting a dramatic piece, was twenty or thirty years of age. In the for-

mer case, Aristophanes could have been little more than twenty-four or twenty-five years old when he produced that elaborate composition. In Kuster's edition, the Scholiast (apparently with good reason) places the established age ten years later than Wieland does; the office was one of serious national importance, and therefore, not likely to be committed to a mere youth.

the triumph of having at once excited and defeated the vengeance of that pestilent demagogue, who seems, as the historian expresses it, to have been as much born for the depression of Athens, as Miltiades, Themistocles, Cymon and Pericles were for its elevation ; while the prize of victory had been awarded to his comedies of the *Acharnians* and the *Knights*. Diffidence* had thus been removed : exertion was stimulated ; and gratitude, success, emulation and hope, all urged the writer to press forward in a career, which had commenced under such favourable auspices.

The first of the dramatic pieces of Aristophanes seems to have been directed against the state of private† manners in Athens ; in his *Acharnians* he endeavoured to moderate the insolence of national success, and to infuse juster notions respecting a great public measure, which was putting the existence of the Athenians as a people at stake ; while in the *Knights*, or, as it may more properly be termed, the

* Diffidence is a quality not usually ascribed to this poet : but his well-known repugnance to take a part in the performance of his own plays (the usual practice of the times) till he was forced into it by circumstances, (see the preface to the *Knights* in this volume,) and the *Parabases* in the *Knights* and the *Clouds*, fully establish the fact.

† The principal characters in

this play, of which only a few fragments have reached us, were two brothers : their names, SOPHRON and CATAPYCON, sufficiently evince, that the object of the play was to establish a comparison between the temperate virtues of the good old times (a favourite theme of Aristophanes) and the unrestrained and unexampled dissoluteness of his own age.

DEMAGOGUES, a mirror was held up to his fellow-citizens, where the ruler and the ruled saw themselves reflected with equal fidelity, and by which posterity has gained a complete knowledge of the greatest historical phenomenon that ever appeared, the **ATHENIAN DEMUS**. It remained for the author to strike at the root of all these evils, private and public, domestic and political,—a mischievous and most pernicious system of education. This was undoubtedly the origin and object of the **CLOUDS**; and a brief outline of the progress of knowledge among the Greeks, and more particularly of that branch of it, which was comprehended under the name of “Philosophy,” will at once tend to explain the aim of the author, and throw some light upon the comedy itself. That Aristophanes had not entered lightly or without reflexion upon the office of a public instructor, this mere arrangement of his subjects, at an age when, if not youthful in years, he was at least young in his career, sufficiently testifies; and we may here see what might have been expected from him in maturer years, if public favour had patronised this attempt to raise the comedy of his country above its ordinary level, and to make it something more than a scene of ebullition for the noisy jollity and licentious revelry of the Dionysian festivals.

The proper epoch of Grecian literature begins with Solon. Before his time, says Frederic Schlegel, the Greeks possessed no more than commonly falls to the share of

every people who are blessed with a favourable corporeal organisation, while they are animated with the fresh impulses of a youthful society—traditions which hold the place of histories, and songs and poems which are repeated and remembered so as to serve instead of books. Such songs, as this excellent writer proceeds to observe, calculated to arouse national feelings, to give animation in the hour of battle, or to be sung at the festivals of their religion, the Greeks possessed, in the utmost variety, from the most early period of their existence as a nation. They possessed also in abundance those still more valuable songs of narrative, which express not the feelings that seize and overpower an individual poet, but which embody the recollection and the feelings of the people,—the faint memory of an almost fabulous antiquity,—the achievements of heroes and of gods,—the origin of a nation, and the creation of the world. Among these stood, highly pre-eminent, the Homeric poems, the still astonishing works of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

In committing these poems to* memory, numerous as we have seen and while books were scarce and valuable, many of them perhaps to be learned only by oral communication; in understanding critically their beauties and de-

* See Xenophon's *Banquet*, p. 69. Oxf. Edit. *Plat. in Prot.* p. 205. *De Leg. lib. vii.* If Homer may be believed, (*Odyss. l. viii.*

v. 578.) the gods wrought the destruction of Troy with a view that there might be subjects for poetry to future generations.

fects, and in attaining, through them, a perfect knowledge of that wonderful language, which, formed amid migrations and revolutions of every kind, yet attained to such perfection, as to make all subsequent languages appear nearly barbarous, consisted a great part, and, from the effect it had in cultivating the imagination at the expense of the understanding, many persons will think a very vicious part, of Athenian* education. But the principal development of the faculties was left to be effected by the two opposite engines, at once producing and evincing that love of contrast, which obtained so much among the Athenians, and which forms the great key to ascertaining their character,—†music and gymnastic exercises. What the music itself of the ancients ever was, we have now, as a very competent‡ observer remarks, little means of judging, as none of it has been transmitted intelligible to us; but that the Grecian music, even from the earliest times, had extraordinary merit, we have Plato's§ testimony in very remarkable words; and

* See this subject pursued at p. 177 in this volume.

† Plato de Leg. lib. vii. De Rep. passim.

‡ Mitford's Hist. of Greece, vol. i. p. 151.

§ Minos, 46 (B). Convivium, 333 (B). The two great founders of the Grecian music, Marsyas and Olympus, seem, from the discove-

ries made at Herculaneum, to have been very favourite objects of representation with the sculptors and artists of Greece. Olympus is generally represented, as a young man of exquisite beauty and the most graceful proportions, taking lessons on the pan-pipe from Marsyas; the latter, from that love of contrast, which ran through

Aristotle, who, according to Montesquieu, had two ruling motives to guide his decisions, affection for Alexander, and a jealousy against Plato, upon this subject* coincides in judgment with his great master. It appears indeed a solecism, as Mr. Mitford observes, to suppose that those elegant perceptions and nice organs which gave form to the most harmonious language ever spoken among men, and guided invention to the structure of that verse which, even under the gross disguise of modern pronunciation, is still universally charming, could have produced or could have tolerated a vicious or inelegant style of music. As instruments of education, Plato delights to dwell upon these two powerful engines: he paints, in the most earnest language, their ill effects, when pursued separately and immoderately; their admirable influence, when conjointly and temperately. Naturally mystic and fanciful, it is not likely that this philosopher should be always clear or plain,† when subjects,

the Grecian arts, or from that idea of ridicule, which latterly attached among the Athenians to the professors of wind music, is generally drawn as a Satyr, as enormous in his proportions as Olympus is delicate.

* Polit. l. viii. c. 5.

† The difficulty consists, in a great degree, in the application of the same words to music as it

acted upon the senses and emotions, and to music as it bore upon grammar, and language, and upon all that range of knowledge, which, giving a complete polish to the mind, makes Plato call his perfect philosopher a perfect musician. (De Rep. l. ix.) Till we can ascertain from Aristotle more clearly than we ever shall do, (see his *Politica*, lib. viii. c. 5, 6, 7.) what

which offered so much temptation to both his ruling propensities, as harmony and the exercises of the palæstra,

were the moral harmonies (*ἡθικαὶ ἁρμονίαι*) which the Greeks applied to the purposes of education—the practical harmonies (*πραγματικαί*), the application of which is wholly uncertain,—and the sacred melodies (*ἱερά μελῶν*), which were directed to the purgation of enthusiasm, we must be content to remain in ignorance of that revolution in music, of which Aristophanes and Plato so much complain as taking place in their day, and which the latter declares, was alone sufficient to shake all the establishments of state to their centre. There is some obscurity even in the following passages, which describe what we should call the practical effects of music and gymnastic exercises; but there is the hand of a master in the description. “When a man allows music to pipe into him, and to make use of his ears, like funnels, for the infusion of soft, sweet and plaintive harmonies; when he passes his time in the titillations of those soothing enjoyments, which song affords,—what courage he had in him becomes softened like iron; and thus losing its hardness,

it becomes fitted for the commerce of life: but if this delight be pursued immoderately, if this iron be put into a state of fusion, the courage gradually melts away, the nerves of the soul are cut out, and a feeble warrior is the result of such a system of conduct. In a person naturally feeble, this result would naturally be more speedy in taking place: in one of a naturally courageous soul, nature being weakened and rendered easy to be thrown off its balance, the least things irritate and soothe him—and instead of being bold and resolute, such a person becomes passionate, morose, full of fantasies and a troublesome fastidiousness. Again, if a person give himself up to the labours of the gymnasium and to feasts, without attention to music or philosophy, such a man becomes filled with high thoughts and courage, and exceeds himself in bravery; but if he do nothing else, if he have no communication with the Muses, even though there had been originally a love of learning in his mind, yet without tasting of that instruction which is gained by application, by inquiry and

were under his consideration; what share they had in producing that physical perfection at least—that union of strength and elegance in the body, and that capacity in the organs for receiving impressions from works of art and beauty,—which has generally been conceded to the Greeks,—we may gather from the observations which he has left us, most* unsparingly, upon the subject. From the earliest periods, education among the greater part of the Athenians seems to have embraced little more than the circle here described: and till the age of Pericles, the three great preceptors of Athenian youth remained as before;—the grammarian, the teacher of music, and the master of the gymnasium.†

conversation, he becomes weak, and deaf, and blind, like a man that is never awakened, nor nourished, nor that has his feelings purified. Such a man becomes a hater of conversation and averse from the Muses: in his language he uses no persuasion; he does every thing, like a beast, by force and ferocity; and he lives in ignorance and rudeness, without any accompaniment of grace or politeness.”—The Platonic Socrates therefore concludes, that the gods had given music and gymnastic exercises to men, that by blending the two properly together the soul might

be made perfect in its two greatest endowments, a temperate courage and a philosophic understanding. De Rep. lib. iii.

* See more particularly the Republic, ll. 3, 4. De Legibus, lib. ii. also In Protagorâ, 199. In Lachete, p. 249.

† Alcibiades, the nephew of the first man in Athens, confesses in the first of those dialogues, which go by his name, that his education had not extended beyond the three masters here mentioned. Alcibiades, Ius. 26. D. E. In the time of Aristotle we find painting added to the routine of education.

But there were some minds of a higher cast and of more restless energies than to be satisfied with this narrow range of instruction; and the same shore which had given birth to the great father of Grecian poetry had, in the person of the Milesian Thales, provided a preceptor, who was at once calculated to excite and, to a certain extent, to gratify that love of research and deep and curious speculation, which seems to have been at least as inherent in the Grecian character, as a love of poetry and the fine arts. How congenial these pursuits were with their national temperament may be inferred from the single remark, that the fire which Thales* lighted up, has never since been extinguished among them. His own school† was followed in quick succession by the Ita-

The Stageirite gives two reasons for the addition thus made to the old range of instruction,—that men might acquire a more accurate tact in estimating the beauty of the human body, *and that they might not be cheated in the purchase or sale of those domestic ornaments or necessities*, which came under the common name of *οναυα*. Arist. de Rep. l. viii. c. 3.

* We believe we might go much farther than Thales to shew the inherent passion of the Greeks for physical pursuits. Many of their earliest mythical fables—Orpheus with his seven-string'd lyre,—the double character of Tiresias,—the

golden ram of Phryxus,—the Thyestean banquet, &c. are all perhaps referable to astronomic researches. See the Treatise de Astrologiâ, generally attributed to Lucian. v. 5. Bip. ed.

† The great leaders in the Ionian school (and it is clear from the writings of Diogenes Laertius that the successions were very accurately observed) were, from the time of its foundation by Thales, to the time of Socrates, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Anaxagoras, Diogenes of Apollonia, and Archelaus; the latter was the preceptor of Socrates.

lian, and Eleatic,* where physical and metaphysical knowledge were followed with equal success; and the dialogues of Plato furnish the most ample testimony of the zeal and fervour with which they were pursued in Athens, as soon as a respite from revolution and wars gave leisure for their introduction into that inquisitive town. The struggle which the Greek philosophy maintained with the doctrines of Christianity, forms one of the great partitions between the old world and the new; and if the Greeks ^{patrons of the Christian} paved the way to the final destruction of their country, by disputing instead of fighting, by trying to settle whether the light upon Mount Tabor† had been from all eternity, or had been produced by God only for the purpose of the Transfiguration, this has not prevented them from soothing the disgrace of political degradation by the subtle inquiries and never-ending debates of polemical divinity.‡ Can we be altogether surprized at it in a nation, which, with organs the most acute and perceptive, possessed a language that could express every sensation; a language, as the historian§ enthusiastically expresses it, so musical and prolific, that it could give a soul to the objects of sense, and a body to the

* The Eleatic, properly speaking, was a branch of the Italian or Pythagorean school.

† Hist. of Mod. Europe, vol. ii. p. 98.

‡ See the notes to the first Canto of Childe Harold.

§ Gibbon.

abstractions of metaphysics?—Those lofty but dangerous speculations, therefore, in which the strongest minds sometimes become entangled, and in which weak minds are sure to suffer shipwreck, became very soon the favourite studies of such among the Greeks, as were possessed of leisure and had a curiosity to satisfy; and GOD, the UNIVERSE and MAN at once divided and engrossed the whole of their attention. Their facts were few, but their disputes were long; if they could not convince, they could at least reason: one absurdity led them to another; but every absurdity furnished a disputation of words, and words,* even without ideas, were as the breath of life to the loquacious Athenians. The extravagant expression of Lessing would, with them, have been strictly in place: If the Almighty held truth in one hand, and in the other the investigation of truth, *my choice*

* What Plato says of the scholars of Heracleitus no doubt applied pretty well to all the philosophers. “It is as easy to talk with madmen as it is with them. Their writings have nothing steady in them: all are in a state of perpetual motion. As for a pause in disputation and interrogation, or a quiet question or answer, it is a chance infinitely less than nothing, that you get such a thing from them. For their minds are in a perpetual state of restlessness: and woe to

him that puts a question to them! instantly comes a flight of enigmatical little words, like arrows from a quiver; and if you ask a reason of this assault, the result is another discharge, with merely a change of names. There is no doing any thing with a single one of them; and they are just as untractable among one another; their only concern being, as it should seem, that nothing fixed or stable should appear either in their language or in their minds.” *Theætetus*, p. 130.

would rest upon the latter. What is God? the philosophers therefore first asked. He is the most ancient of all things, for he is without beginning, said Thales.* He is air, said Anaximenes. He is a pure mind, said Anaxagoras. He is air and mind, said Archelaus. He is mind in a spherical form, said Democritus. He is a monad and the principle of good, said Pythagoras. He is an eternal circular fire, said Heracleitus. He is the finite and immoveable principle in a spherical form, said Parmenides; he is one and every thing, said Melissus and Zenon,—the only eternal and infinite. These were subjects on which the profoundest mind might have discovered the most ample exercise for itself; but to the Greek, a vacuity was still left:† Necessity, Fate and Fortune or Accident filled it up.

The ‡Universe furnished another set of disputations. What is, has ever been, and the world is eternal, said one party. The world is not eternal, but the matter is eternal, argued another party. Was this matter susceptible of forms; of one or many? was it water, or air, or fire? was it an assemblage of atoms, or an infinite number of incorruptible elements? Had this matter subsisted without movement in chaos, or had it an irregular movement? Did the world appear by Intelligence communicating its action to it, or did

* Stobæi Eclogæ, lib. 1. c. iii.
§ 28.

† In iisd. lib. 1. cc. v. vi. vii.

‡ Le Jeune Anach. tom. iii.
Discours du Grand-Prêtre de Cé-
rès sur les Causes premières.

God ordain it by penetrating it with a part of his essence? Did these atoms move in the void, and was the universe the result of their fortuitous union? Are there but two elements in nature, earth and fire, and by these are all things formed and produced; or are there four elements, whose parts are united by Love and separated by Hatred? Causes* and essences, bodies, forms and colours, production and dissolution, the great phenomena of visible nature; the magnitudes, figures, eclipses and phases of the two heavenly luminaries; the nature and division of the sky; the magnitude and situation of the earth; the sea with its ebbs and flows; the causes of thunder, lightning, winds and earthquakes—all these furnished disquisitions, which were pursued with an eagerness of research and intenseness of application, peculiar to the Greeks. Man,† a compound of matter and of mind,—having relations to the universe by the former, and to the Eternal Being by the latter,—presented phenomena and contradictions, as puzzling to the old philosophers, as the universe of which he was the abridgment. While all allowed him a soul and an intelligence, all differed widely in their definition of this soul or intelligence. It is always in motion and it moves by itself, said one party—it is a number

* Stobæi Eclogæ, cc. xiv. xv. xvi. xvii. xxi. xxvi. xxvii. xxiv. xxxv. xxxvi. xl. xli. xx.

† Le Jeune Anach. t. iii. p. 176.

Stob. Ecl. cap. lii. Plutarch de Placit. Philos. Hermiæ Irrisio Philosophorum.

in motion—it is the harmony of the four elements—it is air, it is water, it is fire, it is blood—it is a fiery mixture of things perceptible by the intellect; which have globose shapes and the force of fire—it is a flame which emanates from the sun—it is an assemblage of fiery and spherical atoms, like those subtle particles of matter, which are seen agitated in the rays of the sun.

Such were a few of the speculations, which science had devised, for employing the thoughts of active-minded men in Greece; and if the mere enumeration of them on paper (without entering into the thousand* shades and differences which had all their separate promulgators, advocates and abettors) have excited either a smile or a sensation of wearisomeness in a reader, he may imagine what must have been their effects upon a man of lively and mercurial temperament, like Aristophanes, who found them crossing his path at every turn, and saw them operating with the most ridiculous effects upon the petulance of the lively,† and the conduct of the more sedate!

* The reader, who should wish for further information on these, is referred to Brucker's *Historia Critica Philosophiæ*, tom. i. pars 11. lib. ii. cap. 1.

† Plato, whose satirical powers were not inferior to those of Aristophanes, has described both these classes of persons with great effect.

In the dialogue, called *Philebus*, the Platonic Socrates is thus made to speak. "Our passion for disputation upon subjects of this kind has something in it, which is beyond the reach of decay or mortality. No sooner does one of our young men get a taste of it, than he feels delighted, as if he had dis-

The hold which the philosophers, properly so called according to our nomenclature, acquired over the public mind

covered a treasure of wisdom. Carried away by a pleasure that amounts to madness, he finds a subject of dispute in every thing that occurs. At one time both sides of the subject are considered, and reduced to one. At another, the subject is analysed and split into parts: himself becomes the first and principal victim of his own doubts and difficulties: his neighbour, whether junior, senior, or equal, no matter, is the next sufferer; he spares not father nor mother, nor any one who will give him the loan of his ears; scarcely animals escape him, and much less his fellow-creatures; even the foreigner has no security but the want of an interpreter at hand to go between them." *Philebus*, p. 74. The graver men are pursued with the same severity, and it is observable that Socrates addresses them in the same strain of ridicule, and nearly in the words, which twenty-three^a years before, the author of the *Clouds* had bestowed

upon himself.—"From their earliest days they knew not the way to the agora, nor can they tell where are the courts of justice, or the senate-house, or any of the places of public meeting in the city; as for the laws and public decrees,—whether those promulgated by the voice, or those committed to writing,—they have neither eyes for the one, nor ears for the other. Clubs, and meetings, and suppers, and jovial parties, where there are music-women, are things which never come before them even in a dream. Whether things go well or ill in the city, whether a man's ancestors, either on the male or female side, have been the cause of any calamity to him, are matters of which they are as much in the dark, as they are of the number of sands which lie by the sea-side. They are even so far gone, as not to know that they are ignorant of all this. Nor does this proceed from any peculiar feeling or notion of vanity; but in fact, with a man

^a The chronology of the *Theætetus* is settled in the concluding paragraph of the dialogue, by which we find that it took place on the very day, when Socrates had been summoned to attend in court, to answer the charges made against him by Melitus.

at Athens was gradual, and perhaps at all times partial; that which a much more pernicious class of men, known since by the name of Sophists, assumed, was instantaneous, and almost universal; the very causes which operated against the introduction of philosophy, tending to encourage and give entrance to the precepts of the sophists. The busy and stirring nature of the times, the change from monarchical to republican governments, the institution of popular assemblies, and still more the Persian contest, by making the Greeks act in bodies, where feelings were to be conciliated, prejudices consulted, and large sacrifices of private interest to be demanded in favour of public, all conspired to bring into vogue a knowledge ~~more~~ adapted to the transaction of human business, ~~than the study of the heavens, and the properties of matter, the nature of God and the soul.~~ The successful termination of that most important struggle, the temporary quiet which resulted from it, and the measures which were taken to provide against the recurrence of a similar event, by bringing the different states of Greece still more into contact with each other, naturally assisted the progress

of this kind, it is the body only which is resident in the city: his mind holds matters of this kind as trifles, or rather as things utterly without value, and is, as Pindar terms it, for ever on the wing: to what is *upon* the earth and *below*

the earth, he applies the science of geometry; what is in the heavens he investigates by astronomy; he scrutinises and searches the whole universe, and knows every thing but that which is immediately before him." Theætetus, 127.

of this desire for intellectual improvement: political wisdom soon became the leading object of attainment; and the splendid eminence to which political eloquence led, made it of essential importance to investigate and cultivate those rules which were found most effectual for working upon large bodies of men. It is impossible to peruse the interesting dialogues of Plato and Xenophon, without receiving a most lively impression of the strong ferment, which was then taking place in men's minds, and without recognising in them some of the marks of that agitated fermentation of the intellect, which, whether for good or evil, is working in our own days. To be able to distinguish themselves in the General Assemblies (*δημαγωγικοί εἶναι*)—to make a figure in the courts of justice (*δικανικοί*)—to be ingenious in putting and ready in answering questions (*διαλεκτικοί*)—and what, in the now complicated affairs of Grecian politics, was becoming of still more importance, to become men of business*

* What was required of a man of business in the management of Athenian affairs, will be best learnt by perusing the fourth chapter of Aristotle's first book of Rhetoric, the admirable little dialogue between Glaucon and Socrates in Xenophon's Memorabilia, and the speech of Demosthenes de Coronâ. "Haranguing," as Lord Bolingbroke observes, in allusion to the im-

mense variety of business which passed through the hands of that acutest of statesmen, "was, at this time, the least part of the business of Demosthenes; and eloquence neither the sole, nor the principal talent, as the style of writers would induce us to believe, on which his success depended. He must have been master of other arts, subservient to which his elo-

(πρᾶξις), was the ruling object of every young man's ambition in Athens. The example of Pericles had taught *experimentally* the advantage of a union of the deeper knowledge of philosophy* with the rich gifts of nature; and the splendid prize, which had for so many years been the reward of his profound accomplishments, seems to have stood before the eyes of his young and admiring fellow-countrymen till it absolutely dazzled and blinded them.† All wished to be like Pericles‡—all would be at the head of public affairs—all would command men, and have their fame spread, like *his* fame, and that of Themistocles,§ from their own city to Greece, and from Greece to the remotest regions of bar-

quence was employed; and must have had a thorough knowledge of his own state, and of the other states of Greece; of their dispositions, and of their interests, relatively to one another and relatively to their neighbours: I say, he must have been master of many other arts, and have possessed an immense fund of knowledge, to make his eloquence in every case successful, and even pertinent and seasonable in some, as well as to direct and furnish it with matter, whenever he thought fit to employ that weapon." *Lord Bolingbroke on the Spirit of Patriotism.*

* Pericles had been a scholar of Anaxagoras; and from his inter-

course with that philosopher, to whom is attributed the first conception of one Eternal, Almighty, and All-good Being, he is said by Plato (in *Phædrus*, 354 D.) to have derived that forcible and sublime spirit of oratory, which distinguished him above all his contemporaries. / For an account of Anaxagoras see Brucker's chapter. de Sectâ Ionicâ, § xix. The learned German, who might have been expected, from the bulk of his enormous tomes, to have *thought away* all feeling, becomes almost affecting in his account of this real and most enthusiastic philosopher.

† Plato in *Theæg.* p. 9. H.

‡ Xen. *Mem. lib. iii. cap. 6.*

barism. But how was this knowledge to be acquired?—For those of younger years there was no deficiency of masters in those branches, which formed the system of education in Athens; but for young men of riper age, who had passed through the hands of the grammarian and the music-master, and acquired that limited knowledge of arithmetic, geometry, history, and astronomy, which the then state of science could supply, no establishments, like our universities,† were in being, where further opportunities

* Plato insists very strongly upon the cultivation of these branches of science (his love for arithmetic, in particular, is well known) in the course of instruction provided for his imaginary republic; but he does it less with any view to practical purposes, than as means of disciplining the mind and preparing it for the power of contemplating things in their essences, the favourite object of the Platonic doctrine. See the 7th book of the Republic; also the Epinomis.

† Something like them did afterwards exist, in the Lyceum, the Academy, and those other establishments for the 'éducation champêtre' of the Athenians, of which M. de Pauw speaks in such rapturous terms. This gentleman, who often makes his readers pay for the valuable knowledge he communicates by the manner in which it is conveyed, or the remarks by which it is accompanied, has made their establishment a vehicle for throwing out a most in-

* The common term, by which readers call that work of Plato, the most brilliant effort of his genius, as his legislation was the most perfect of his mature judgment, is here used; but every scholar is aware, that a republic ranked in Plato's mind only one degree above a perfect despotism; the most perfect government, according to this great philosopher, was a monarchy, or aristocracy. It was not very likely indeed, that a person, who ranked a capacity for politics with poetry and prophecy, and considered all three as immediate inspirations from heaven, (in Men. 24. D.) should have drawn his ideas of a perfect government from the fractional sovereigns under whom it was his own misera-
fate to be born.

were held out to that dangerous age, when a course of instruction, fitted to fill and enlarge the mind, to form the taste, and, what is still more important, to perfect the morals, becomes so imperiously necessary. But where a want is felt in society, it is not long before some one starts up to supply it; and a race of men soon made their way into Athens, who, under the name of Sophists, undertook to supply all deficiencies of schools, halls, and colleges. The first person* who acquired distinction in this profession, sufficient to make his name known to posterity, and to have an influence upon the age in which he lived, was PROTAGORAS of Abdera. Originally a faggot-maker, his mode of tying up bundles excited the attention of Democritus; and the instructions of that philosopher subsequently enabled him to quit a trade, in which he might have been humbly useful, for a profession in which he unfortunately became splendidly mischievous. The human mind never losing altogether the impression of its first employments, the inventor of the porter's knot became also the discoverer of

saltling taunt upon one of our own academical institutions: M. de Pauw is not now living to know, that Oxford has adopted a course of education which will enable her nobly to repel all such insinuations in future; and that the reproaches of former days are but so many

tributes of applause to the wisdom and energy by which the pursuits of that illustrious university are now directed and animated.—*Recherches Philosophiques sur les Grecs. Discours Préliminaire*, p. 14.

* Plato in *Protagorâ*, 209.

the knots of language; and accordingly, to Protagoras* is ascribed the pernicious proclamation, which announced, that with him might be acquired, for a proper compensation, that species of knowledge, which was able to confound right and wrong, and make the worse appear the better cause: a doctrine which strikes us with amazement and confusion, but which was propagated with such success, that in the days of Aristophanes and Plato it appears to have excited little surprise in those who professed it, and to have been rather expected than otherwise in such persons as set themselves up for teachers of wisdom. Bred in that school of philosophy, (if Schelling will allow us to make use of so unphilosophical an expression,) which taught that there was nothing† fixed in nature, this flagitious sophist carried the uncertain and dangerous language of physics into the business of human life, and thus poisoned the stream of truth in its very fountain and source. The direct language‡ of Thales, Epicharmus,§ and Heracleitus,

* Arist. Rhet. lib. ii. c. 26. Diog. Laert. in vitâ Prot. lib. ix. seg. 51. Isocr. in Laude Helenæ.

† Parmenides and Melissus taught just the reverse.

‡ For this exposition of the doctrines of Protagoras, see Plato's Dialogue of Theætetus, and the Commentaries of Marsilius Ficinus.

§ In Mr. Twining's excellent notes upon Aristotle, some surprise is expressed by that learned and most agreeable writer, (to whom the reader is indebted for the substance of one or two notes in this discourse,) that Epicharmus should have selected so unsuitable a vehicle for his speculations as the trochaic tetrameter. The philosophi-

and the allegorical genealogies of Homer were brought to prove, that all things being in a state of continual motion, nothing actually *is*, and every thing is in a state of *becoming*: that an object therefore, considered in itself, is not one thing more than another; but that through motion, mixture, and the relation of one thing to another, the same object both *was* and *appeared* one thing to one person, and another thing to another. What are called heat and cold, changed their situations, it was said, even in the time of pronouncing the words; and before the enunciation was completed, heat ceased to be heat, and cold ceased to be cold—nothing, therefore, it was inferred, can be affirmed or even seen with certainty: heat is no more heat than cold, white is not more white than its opposite, knowledge is nothing more than sensation, man is the measure of all things, of things existing, as they are, and of things non-existing, as they are not, and all thoughts are true. For every one thinks according to the impression made upon him, impressions are made by

cal opinions of the old Greeks were usually conveyed in hexameter verse; there is therefore room for suspecting that in the verses alluded to, Mr. Twining and Aldobrandinus have agreed in attributing (see the life of Plato in Diog. Laert. lib. iii. seg. 10.) to Epicharmus, son of Helothales, the philosopher, what more properly be-

longed to Epicharmus, the father of the old comedy. The verses are evidently part of a dialogue; and a metre, corresponding with our "*Jolly mortals, fill your glasses,*" was well suited to a parody upon philosophical poetry, though certainly little adapted to the gravity of didactic and philosophical poetry itself.

what is in motion, motion is created by agency, agency can proceed only from the things which are, and the things which are, must be true. From these sentiments it naturally followed, that not only what is wholesome and useful had no actual substance in themselves; but that honour and virtue, being the beginning and aim of what is useful, existed only in the opinions and habits of men.

To controvert these opinions was a task of no easy kind: for the author of them maintained that it was not merely impossible to *say* what was false, but even to *think* what was false. He gravely asserted that there was no such thing as a false opinion, and that ignorance was a thing physically impossible; and he allowed that it being impossible for a person to lie, or to hold a wrong opinion, or even to be ignorant, it followed that there was no such thing as aberration in word, thought, or action. A puzzling question sometimes met the assertors of these opinions; viz. what, in such a state of perfection, remained for themselves to teach: but this was got rid of by abuse, or by a piece of sophistry, which put an end to all disputation *in limine*. They maintained that there was no such thing as contradiction, or that a man could demonstrate that he had ever heard one man contradicting another; for, said the author of these opinions, or his disciples for him, every existing thing has its own proper definitions, and these definitions are, as every thing *is*, and not as it *is not*: nobody therefore

speaks the thing which is not, for nobody can say the thing which is not in existence. They further put two cases: if each of us, said they, in defining the same thing coincide in our definition, it is plain that we both agree in opinion; but if our definitions upon the same thing vary, it is so far from being a disagreement of ideas upon a subject, that neither of us can properly be said to have started the subject: since I, therefore, concluded the triumphant sophist, define one thing, and you another, what contradiction is there between us?—May it not rather be asserted, that I speak of a thing, and that you advance nothing about it? and how can he who says nothing be said to contradict him who says something?

In such a town as Athens, we may easily imagine that the small wits and humbler* sophists eagerly fastened upon

* Plato has left us a most amusing specimen in his dialogue called Euthydemus, of the smaller craft of sophists, who confined themselves to this legerdemain of language, and who contented themselves with offering that insult, which the understanding feels at being confuted but not convicted; at finding that words are against it, and things for it; at feeling that it cannot yield to conclusions apparently true, without violence to that plain sense of right, which is

the voice of the Divinity within us, and worth all the systems of logic that ever were invented. A brief analysis of this lively dialogue will contribute very much to give the reader a picture of the times and of the manner in which the education of the young Athenians of family was conducted. The impudent sophist from whom the dialogue derives its name, was one of two brothers who had gained considerable reputation by giving lessons in tactics and other branches

doctrines, so well suited to the meridian of their capacities, as those which are here ascribed to the philosopher of Ab-

of knowledge connected with a military life. They found it more profitable, however, to change the war of weapons for that of words, and to prepare scholars for the arena of the Ecclesia and courts of law, in preference to disciplining them for the field of battle. The dialogue commences with one of those natural touches, which give an air of reality to a picture, and which Plato, like all other men of genius, is fond of using. Socrates, meeting his first and most excellent friend Criton, is questioned by him as to the person with whom he had been seen holding a disputation in the Lyceum the day before: There was a great crowd, says the worthy questionist; so that though I advanced as closely as possible, with an eager desire to hear what was passing, I was unable to understand any thing distinctly. By raising my head above the rest, I got a view indeed, and as far as I could discern, it was no native of the city with whom you were disputing. This affords an opening to the dialogue:—the name of the stranger (Euthydemus),—of his brother, who assisted in the disputation (Dionysodorus),—their for-

mer profession and their present pursuits, are recorded in due order. Socrates then proceeds to answer Criton's second question, which implied a wish to know the subject of the disputation. "By the influence of some god, says the philosopher, it was my lot to be sitting where you saw me, in the Apodyterium; (the place where the young Athenians, preparing for the exercises of the palaestra, deposited their clothes;) I had the place entirely to myself, and indeed I was just thinking of leaving it, when, as I rose up, the usual signal from the dæmon took place. (What the dæmon of Socrates was, whether a real spirit, a vision, a voice, an immediate inspiration from the Deity, or that inward feeling, which by continued reflexions upon the past and future gives the wise man something like a prophetic sensation of what ought to be done, this is not the place to inquire.) "Attentive to this impulse," continues the philosopher, "I immediately gave up my intention of going away:"—his compliance was duly rewarded; for it was followed by the almost immediate entrance of Euthydemus and

dera. When the great Belial himself first began to advance them, and more particularly those odious ones, which ought

Dionysodorus, attended by a large crowd of scholars. The sophists having taken two or three turns in the hypodrome, or covered porch where the wrestlers practised their exercises in winter, Cleinias, a young person in whose education Socrates took an interest, and a great deal of other company drop in. Greetings and salutations pass between the parties: a slight skirmishing of irony on the side of Socrates, and of contemptuousness on the part of the sophists, soon leads the way to a more direct engagement, and an assertion made by the two sophists, that virtue could be made a subject of instruction, at last brings the parties to close quarters. Cleinias is proposed as a pupil, on whom the efficacy of this boasted annunciation may be tried, and the sophists, with the usual confidence of their class, engage to make their words perfectly good. A question accordingly is put to the young man by way of making trial of his abilities, and he is asked, which class of men are to be called learners, the wise or the unlearned? At this important question, says the satirical narrator, the young

man blushed and turned his eyes to me in a state of hesitation. The desired encouragement, however, was given by Socrates to his young friend; Dionysodorus whispering the former with a smile on his countenance, that it was immaterial which side of the question the youth took, as he would be equally confuted on the spot. The reader will, after such an annunciation, think it immaterial to know which side was first taken: the result was as Dionysodorus had predicted, and the conviction of Cleinias is followed by a fremitus of applause from the two sophists and their friends. The question in its other shape meets with the same ill success on the part of the young disputant, and a roar of approbation and triumph again breaks forth from the opposing party; resembling, says the narrator, the laughter of a *CHORUS*, whose leader has given them the signal for most obstreperous mirth. Some other puzzling, or as the original terms them in a sense which our language does not altogether convey, "inevitable" questions succeed this successful one; the two brothers alternately taking up the ball, till

to heap the curses of posterity upon his head; viz. the doctrine of sensation, and the offer to teach, how in disputation

the young man finds himself utterly thrown by this new species of wrestling. Socrates then comes to his help; he points out to him the fallacies of the terms by which he has been thus ignominiously worsted, and assures him that what had hitherto passed was but a little playfulness on the part of the sophists, resembling the wantonness of those wags, who take a man's chair from under him when he is preparing to sit down, and then laugh at the awkwardness to which it reduces him; he assures him that the rest of the disputation will be carried on with that seriousness and propriety, which were due to the discussion of an inquiry so important, as that which endeavoured to ascertain, by what methods a young man may best be led into the paths of virtue and wisdom, and he proceeds to relieve the preceding impertinences of the sophists by one of his own beautiful discourses. In this disquisition, after defining happiness by the common notion, that it consists in living agreeably, he proves that living agreeably must depend upon gaining the objects of our wishes and using them rightly; and he

concludes by a set of inductions, the tendency of which is to shew that as by wisdom alone such wishes can be effected, and used rightly, the just inference is that nothing can make us happy but wisdom. This impressive discourse ended, the dialogue returns again to a display of sophistical skill on the part of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, and the spirit of the piece is kept up with the most unabated animation to the end. By the help of certain fallacies, which our language does not present adequate means of representing, the sophists prove to their own satisfaction that if a man knew *one* thing he knew *every* thing: curriery, house-building, stitching, shoe-making, dancing, sword-diving, wheel-turning,—nothing was beyond his knowledge: they profess that themselves are proofs of the truth of this assertion, and are only induced to abate their confidence by being made to see that neither of them knew how many teeth the other had in his mouth. As if this universal knowledge were insufficient, they prove to their fellow-disputant, who was now no other than Socrates, that he possessed all this

the worse cause might be made to appear the better, we cannot say: but we find it declared *by Socrates that the hoary impostor had for a space of more than forty years been advancing them, and that from the practice of this

knowledge when a boy—at the moment of his birth—before his birth, nay, before the creation of the earth and heavens; and they demonstrate that as this universal knowledge had belonged to him in all preceding times, so it rested merely upon their good will to cause it to remain with him to all succeeding generations. They proceed to shew that a man could be silent and speak at the same time; that it was all one to them to prove that a man knew a thing or did not know a thing, or that he both knew and did not know a thing at the same time;—they convince their disputant that he had a father,—that he had no father,—that a dog was his father,—that his father was everybody's father,—that his mother had an offspring equally numerous, and that in this happy family, horses, pigs, and crab-fish were all common brethren, with the same rights and ties of consanguinity and affection. Being told that the beautiful is created by the presence of beauty, they argue, that by ap-

proximation to a bull, a man becomes a bull; that Socrates is no more Socrates than Cleinias, nor Cleinias than Socrates, and that Socrates and Cleinias are one and the same person. Laying hold upon those constructions of language, which our more imperfect idioms do not admit, they prove that in cutting up a butcher and boiling him there is no injury committed, and that it is both decent and becoming to solder a brazier in his own brass, and to glue up a potter in his own pottery. But it is felt that this trifling was more agreeable to the original promulgators and auditors of it, than it can be made to a modern reader; and, I fear, that a sense of weariness must be stealing over him at these specimens of sophistry, which were delivered, as Plato informs us, amid such peals of laughter and such exuberance of exultation, that the very pillars of the Lyceum seemed to join in the triumphant jubilee.

* In Menone, 21. C.

baneful trade he had derived more gains *than Pheidias and ten sculptors to boot.—So much more agreeable to Athenian minds, it should seem, were cunning, trick, fallacy and deception, than those noble specimens of art, which were then growing up among them, and on whose mutilated remains, the more accomplished of our own countrymen are too happy to be allowed to fix their eyes in fervent †admiration!

The market was now successfully opened and adventurers of a similar cast soon flocked in abundance to Athens, who insinuated in terms much more intelligible and in lan-

* In Eodem. 21. B.

† It may be noticed as somewhat remarkable, that the great contemporary writers, who grew up among the very creation of these truly magnificent labours, scarcely ever condescended to mention any thing more than the mere names of the author of them. The great comic poet of his day refers to them as often as any body; and there is one passage in his works which, as characteristic of the times, may deserve to be mentioned. Among the innumerable statues in Athens, not one, it appears, was to be found dedicated to that allegorical divinity, which the Greeks called *Αἰδώς*, and for which our nearest, but very une-

qual term, is Modesty. As no statue of this divinity was in being, the poet cautions his young auditors to build up a statue to it in their own breasts. In Nub. Arist. v. 995. Lucian, a very diligent reader of Aristophanes, and who only kept his admirable and overflowing wit in order by his extensive erudition, has left us some delicate remarks, by which we see that he had as fine an eye for works of art, as his mind's eye penetrated into every shade and minute separation of manners. See among other his treatises, *de Domo*, *de Imaginibus*, *de Amorbis*, *de Balneo*, *de Herodoto vel Aetione*, &c.

guage much more palatable, the doctrines which Protagoras had delivered in the abstruse and often obscure terms of physical or metaphysical science. Among a crowd of persons, who now, under the name of sophists, took the public education of the young Athenians into their hands, and had more or less a fatal influence upon their intellects and manners, history has preserved the names of Prodicus of Ceos, Gorgias of Leontium, Hippias of Elis, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus of Chios, Theodorus of Byzantium, Evenus of Paros, Polus of Agrigentum, Callicles, Thrasy-machus, Tisias, Licymnion, &c.; and before adverting to the doctrines which they taught, the state of Athenian society will be traced more accurately by dwelling a little longer upon the actual introduction of the sophists into it. The greater part of these men, as the reader will see by their names, were strangers, not natives of Attica; but their abilities in their own country had pointed them out for distinction, and when business was to be transacted with other states, and more particularly with the imperial town of Athens, none seemed more fitted to conduct it to the advantage of their mother-country. Many of them therefore made their first appearance at Athens in the capacity of public ambassadors;* and their manner of conducting public business, their ostentatious professions, the boasted

* Plato in *Hippiâ Majore*. 95 (D) 96 (E). In *Prot.* 203. *Arist. Rhet.* l. iii. c. 17.

extent of their attainments, the charms of their language, and even their personal appearance, all tended to captivate in an astonishing manner the minds of a people naturally greedy of what was new; and nothing could be more calculated to fix it than these men. They appeared in sumptuous robes,* followed by a numerous escort of noble youths, who accompanied them from town to town, and who thus acquired by oral communication that knowledge which books could not supply, or which, from the costliness of books, was difficult of attainment:—their language was rich† and artificial, full of splendid antitheses and far-sought metaphors; they were subtle in argument, and where argument failed they amused the imagination by the most fanciful tales: for the fancy properly kept in play, these men were masters enough of their trade to know that any proposition, however specious or false, might safely be dropped upon a soil, so well fitted by its previous nature to multiply the seed entrusted to it. Their language had also the additional charm of novelty to recommend it; for the knowledge of physics and almost all other science had hitherto been communicated in verse, and the language of prose, as far as artificial beauty was concerned, remained yet to be discovered.

In terms thus persuasive, and with a confidence the most

* Hipp. Maj. 98 (G).

475. Arist. Rhet. i. iii. c. 3. 9.

† In Protag. 204 (D). Rep. 6. 14. In Phæd. 353.

unlimited in their powers, they professed themselves ready to answer every* question, leaving the choice of the manner† to the will of the questionist. Considering nothing as too high by its abstruseness nor too mean by its lowness, they professed to have acquired, and they engaged themselves to teach, *all knowledge*. To make good this boast of universal talent, one of them actually exhibited himself‡ at the Olympic games, not merely with what might be supposed the travelling stock of a person of his profession, a set of epics, tragedies, dithyrambics and speeches, but with the annunciation that every article about his person,—his ring, his seal, his body-coat, his perfume-box, his upper and under mantle, his girdle, and even his shoes, was the work of his own hands. Their boast of what they could do for their pupils was as pompous as the exaggerated declarations of their own attainments; the first day was to make an impression; in the second, this progress was to be still more visible; in the course of a month or two they engaged to make them every thing that could be wished: neither age

* Plato in Menone, 12. D. In Gorgia, 281. The learned and venerable President of Magdalen Coll. Oxf. (Dr. Routh) compares them in this sense to the itinerant scholars of the middle ages, whose practice it was to set up challenges, offering to dispute *de omni scibili*. Plat. Euthy. et Gorg. p. 363. It

would require a longer note than can, at present, be allowed, to shew, that this was only one among a number of parallel points, which the schoolmen of the middle ages furnish with the sophists of the age of Pericles.

† In Prot. 203. D.

‡ Hipp. Min. 231 (G. H.)

nor capacity* was to be any obstacle, and all this was to be done without lett or hindrance of business; and business in the happy, innocent, polished and poetical town of Athens, was proclaimed to be, what it is in most other towns—money-getting.† The price of knowledge was indeed high: a single lecture, or *epideixis* as it was called, sometimes cost fifty drachmæ,‡ and one of these instructors, from the rewards of his professional labours, could afford to place a golden statue of himself in the temple of Apollo at Delphi. But when a mania took place in Athens, whether for cock-fighting or speech-making, for quail-feeding§ or philosophy, it was no slight obstacle that could oppose it; and Philosophy had now become the fashionable study. He therefore that had money, bought knowledge: he that had no resources of his own, drew upon his friends; and he who had neither resources nor friends, was told to beg,

* In Euthydemo, 228 C.

† Ibid.

‡ The lectures of Prodicus were given at this sum. Arist. Rhet. lib. iii. c. 14. p. 222. Protagoras used to pursue a more curious course with his scholars. If they were unwilling to give the price asked, he took them into a temple, and there swore them as to the price which they thought his instructions worth. In Prot. 200 F.

§ Plato mentions (de Legibus, lib. vii.) that it was the fashion with the young Athenians to carry their quails out on a regular airing every day in their hands or under their arms. Lucian says (de Gymn. v. 7. p. 199.) that all adults were obliged by law to be present at the cock and quail fights, and not to retire till want of strength disabled the combatants from further contention.

borrow, or steal, and at any rate not to be without some of the droppings, at least, of this precious banquet. Luckily the poorest needed not be hopeless; for an Athenian was a garrulous animal; and whoever had an egg to lay, was, in general, only solicitous for a corner in which he might deposit it. The manly diversions of the field* were accordingly left for the Schools—not to be a philosopher† was not

* Arist. in Equit. 1382. Hunting was less an amusement than a branch of education among the Athenians. Isocrates, accordingly, when stating the compulsory objects of pursuit among his young countrymen in the better days of the republic, classes together "horsemanship, the gymnastic exercises, hunting and philosophy." In Orat. Areop. v. i. p. 297.

† In Erastis. In Theage. A brief analysis of the dialogue of Plato, called Protagoras, will put this in a clearer light than any further remark which can be made, and will, with the analysis of the Euthydemus, before given, put the reader into possession of all that is necessary on this subject. The opening of the dialogue describes Socrates and a friend, whose name does not transpire in the piece, as meeting together;—accidentally

the dialogue gives us to suppose, and most probably in one of those public places where, after the mid-day *siesta*, it was the fashion for the citizens of Athens, who did not prefer hunting, or the exercises of the palaestra, to meet together for the purposes of discourse or disputation. The unknown friend, who appears to have been in the secret of the great philosopher's movements, begins the conversation by questioning him on the subject of Alcibiades; and the language in which these inquiries are made, will not altogether surprise those who remember the coarse^a term by which Xenophon characterizes the effect produced on the ladies of Athens, by the extraordinary beauty and exterior accomplishments of this dissipated young man.—Had Socrates lately left this beautiful youth; and did

^a Mem. lib. i. c. 2. § 24.

to be a gentleman ; and the arrival of a new sophist, who could add to the stores acquired, or recommend by any

the uncommon attentions which his great friend and preceptor was continually bestowing upon him, meet yet with any adequate return?—The first question is answered in the affirmative ; the latter in terms implying the highest satisfaction : Socrates had just left his favourite pupil, and, what was better, he had experienced from him more unequivocal marks of good affection, than this untoward youth had ever before manifested to him. § The questionist is further told, to his apparent surprise and almost utter disbelief, that the philosopher had actually been in the young man's company a considerable time without perceiving that he was in possession of that pleasure, which he so greedily coveted ; but all surprise ceases, when he finds that it was the superior attractions of the sophist Protagoras, then newly returned to Athens, which had caused this temporary alienation of mind, and unusual abstraction from the merits of his young friend. Attention once excited by the recent information, questions follow in rapid succession :—Had Socrates

and Protagoras met, and what had been the results of the conference? —Seats were at hand—a lad, who occupied one, (Plato never loses sight of any little particular which can give effect to his pictures,) is presently dispossessed, the two friends are as quickly seated, and the philosopher, nothing loath, commences his narration as follows. (The reader will here have a specimen of the plain, familiar, and almost homely manner, which in Plato frequently leads to the discussion of questions, trying the utmost extent of the human understanding.)

“ Long before day-light, this morning, Hippocrates, the son of Apollodorus and the brother of Phason, beat violently at my gate with his walking-stick. As soon as it was opened to him, he entered in violent haste, and, speaking in a loud tone of voice, ‘ Socrates,’ said he, ‘ are you asleep or awake?’ Knowing his voice, ‘ What,’ said I, ‘ have we Hippocrates here? What news?’—‘ None but good news.’ ‘ So much the better ; but what is your good news, or what brings you here?’ ‘ Protagoras,’ says he,

novelty of diction the knowledge already existing, was considered as a subject of national congratulation. The houses

'is arrived, and lodges not far from our house.' 'Tut,' said I, 'have you just heard that? he arrived three days ago.' 'So help me, Jupiter, not till the evening,' said he: at the same time feeling about for the bed, he seated himself at my feet, saying, 'I assure you he came in the evening, and very late too, on his road from CEnoë. I had been in pursuit of a run-away slave; a circumstance which I meant to have imparted to you; but something put it out of my head. On my return home—just after supper, and as we were retiring for the night,—my brother came to tell me, that Protagoras was arrived. My first thought was to come to you, and I had actually set about it; but the advanced state of the night made me give up the attempt. No sooner, however, had my toils been refreshed, and my sleep relaxed, than I rose up and set out to come here.' As I well knew the young man's courage, and yet saw an evident agitation about him, I said, 'And what have you to do with all this; has Protagoras done you any injury?' 'A very serious one,' replied

he with a laugh, 'for I look upon him as the only wise man living, and he has not made me like himself.' 'Nay,' said I, 'with a present of money and a little persuasion, he may be prevailed upon to make you also a wise man.'—'Ah! if it depended only upon that, I would spare neither my own property nor that of my friends! and indeed the very object of my visit is to beg you to speak on my behalf to him: for I am as yet but young, and I can neither boast of having seen nor heard Protagoras, being but a mere boy when he was here on his former visit. But, Socrates,—his praise is in every body's mouth, and all the world says, that in wisdom of speech nobody excels him. Why not go then, and see if we can find him at home? he is entertained, I understand, at Callias's, the son of Hipponicus—pray let us be gone.' 'Stop a little, my good friend,' said I, 'the morning is yet too early—let us quit this room, and retire into the hall; we can walk about there, and waste the time till it is light; it will then be time for us to go: Protagoras is not much

of the great and the wealthy were immediately thrown open to him—the young men crowded to hear and to admire—

in the habit of going abroad and there is no fear, therefore, of not finding him at home.'—The philosopher and his young friend accordingly retire into the hall, and Socrates, never idle, begins to try his companion's strength, by putting a few questions to him. 'If you were going,' says he, 'to your namesake Hippocrates the physician with a fee in your hand, and were to put yourself under his tuition, and any body should ask the object of your proceeding?'.... The answer of the young man was ready: 'every body would know that I wished to become a physician.' 'If in like manner you went to Polycleitus the Argive, or to Pheidias the Athenian?' 'He should have an answer to any body's question by saying that he wished to become a sculptor.' The question naturally followed, and what was his 'object in going to Protagoras?—what was Protagoras, and what did he profess to teach? The question leads to a short inquiry what a sophist is; and the result is one of those coarse, and contemptuous definitions which Socrates delighted to

fasten upon this dangerous body of men. He compares the sophist to the itinerant and stationary dealers (*λευταί, πωληταί*) whose wares were directed to the support of the body, as those of the former resembled eatables which were intended to support the soul: 'for the soul,' says the philosopher, 'is fed by knowledge, and we must take care that the sophist, in pretending to administer food to it, does not practise upon us the same deception as the dealers do; for these men bring their eatables without any knowledge whether what they sell be good or bad for the body, and praise at the same time all they bring indiscriminately; the purchaser too is as ignorant as the vender, unless he happen to be a gymnastic man or a physician. So,' continues the philosopher, 'these men who carry their knowledge about from city to city, praise all they sell; without knowing, it is possible, whether what they sell be good or bad for the soul, and the purchaser is, perhaps, just as ignorant, unless he happen to be a mental physician.' He concludes, therefore, with a strong

sleep itself was broken to attend his instructions ; and those honours, fêtes, and caresses which in the fashionable circles

caution to his young friend, to beware lest, in purchasing the wares of Protagoras, or any other sophist, he should put all that ought to be dear to a man to danger or hazard. ' For,' adds this real philosopher, ' there is much greater danger in buying knowledge than there is in buying food: for he who purchases eatables or drinkables, can carry them home in another vessel, before he tastes of them; and having deposited them there, he can either examine them himself, or call in the judgment of a skilful friend, and thus learn what is fit to be eaten or drunk, and when it should be eaten and to what extent. In buying food, therefore, there is no great danger; but it is not so with knowledge: *that* cannot be transferred to another vessel; he who buys it must take it in his soul, and having paid the price, there it must remain, for good or for evil, according to the nature of the article bought.'—By the time this discourse was ended, day had broken, and the two friends were presently upon their journey to Callias the reader is little ac-

quainted with the manners of the times, if he supposes it was a quiet one: a knotty point is argued during the walk, and as the dispute is not settled when they arrive at their journey's end, they stand in a forecourt of the house, to argue the matter to an end. Their loudness and vehemence here bring a little unpleasantness upon the two disputants, which is told with the utmost good humour. Every man of fashion in Athens (and Callias was a man of high fashion) kept a eunuch at his gate, as a Swiss porter was formerly an appendage to the hall of every great house in London. The great resort of sophists to the house of Callias made this man's place no sinecure to him; and judging, from the loud tones of the philosopher and his friend, that they must be two of the profession who worked him so much discomfort, he meets their application for admission with the utmost rudeness, throws the odious name of sophist in their teeth, insists upon it that his master is not at home, and fairly flings the door in their faces. The two friends make a second application;

of London are now lavished upon the great leaders of our poetry, were in those days reserved for the successful pro-

they assure the angry porter that they are no sophists, and they announce that their visit is to Protagoras and not to Callias. The gate at this turns reluctantly upon its hinges, and they are admitted into the presence. The grouping of the company is painted with the hand of a master. In the prostoia was found Protagoras walking about, and a numerous train of scholars accompanying his steps. On one side of him was Callias the son of Hipponicus, (the common entertainer of all sophists,) his half-brother by the mother's side, Paralus the son of Pericles, and Charmides the son of Glaucon: on the other side he was supported by Xanthippus the other son of Pericles, by Philippides the son of Philomelus, and by Antimærus the Mendæan, of whom, as a future sophist, great expectations seem to have been formed. These were the chosen, the elect:—behind followed a crowd of humble listeners, partly natives of Athens, and partly strangers, who had followed Protagoras from their own native cities; led by the charms of his voice, says the satirical nar-

nator, like the tribe on whom the voice of Orpheus worked a similar effect. The order observed by these docile pupils more particularly pleased the observing philosopher. 'They took the utmost care,' says he, 'never to be in the way of Protagoras, as he advanced; but when he and his more select friends turned, the retainers with the utmost propriety divided here and there, going about in a circle, and ordering matters so as to be always in the rear of their great teacher and model.' In an opposite prostoia was discerned Hippias of Elis, seated on a throne, and a choice troop surrounding him on benches, who put questions to him in physics, and the higher branches of astronomy;—and he, sitting on a throne, resolved and explained to them all their doubts.'—The 'divine' Prodicus is described as stowed into a sort of pantry, (the number of guests having left no other apartment unoccupied,) and he appears to have been a less early riser than the other sophists, for he is represented as still tenant of his bed, and covered up in a very comfortable

mulgators of sophistry, or, as it began to be called, philosophy.

We have hitherto traced the course of Athenian education, and the masters under whom it was acquired; it will now be necessary to take a rapid glance at the effect of such a system of education upon manners, and then proceed to the more serious part of our subject, its influence upon the morals of the times. A little history (for the delightful work of Herodotus had but just banished the marvellous prodigies of Cadmus and Eugæon, and the prosing narratives of Hecatæus and Hellanicus); a little geometry (for the Delphic oracle had not even yet promulgated the problem, whose solution was to carry geometrical science a step farther than the measure of surfaces); a little astronomy (for the Metonic discoveries, respectable as they were, are to the *Principia* and the *Mécanique Céleste* as a rush-light

assortment of coverlets and blankets. Like a French lady, however, his bed is no obstacle to his receiving visitors, and he too has his *circle*. Among the numerous body of scholars around him, are particularized Pausanias and his friend the beautiful Agathon, the two Adimanti, one the son of Cepis, the other the son of Lencolophides, and a few others. What the subject of conversation was in this quarter, Socrates could

not learn; for the voice of Prodicus was thick and indistinct, and thus baffled the intense curiosity of his would-be auditor. Soon after this, Alcibiades and Critias enter: Socrates explains the object of his visit, and the business of the day begins.—As the object in this note has been merely to explain the *manners* of the times, we may here take leave of this very amusing dialogue.

to the full blaze of the meridian sun):—these, with whatever mass of poetry and music was laid as the substrata, were the utmost limits to which Athenian education could possibly reach; and it is presumed that any young person in the higher order of society among ourselves, who should be thrown upon the stream of life with no more ballast than this, would not have himself only to blame, if he suffered shipwreck on the voyage; and the more discerning spirits of antiquity thought precisely of the attainments of their countrymen as we do. It is impossible to read the works of Plato and Aristophanes, the two great painters of the higher and lower classes of society in Athens, without being struck with the incessant pains they take, to root out of the minds of their fellow-citizens the false notions of superior wisdom, which, upon the strength of these small acquirements, and the superficial lessons of the sophists, were growing up among them. The serious powers of the former* and the unsparing ridicule of the latter are exerted on all occasions, and with the happiest success, to prove, that with all the pretensions of their countrymen, their knowledge consisted in mere appearance and not in reality;

* See among other of his dialogues that singular one called the Sophist. It may safely be said, that the person who has not read this dialogue (utterly unsuscepti-

ble of translation) and the Comedies of Aristophanes, can have no idea of the powers of the Greek language.

that they were lovers of the knowledge which lay merely in *opinion* (φιλοδοξοί), not lovers of the wisdom, which lay in *real science* (φιλοσοφοί). To separate and define with the utmost precision these distinct species of knowledge, the most gigantic powers are displayed by Plato: it was with this view, no doubt, that he framed his theory* of the two worlds, the one visible, the other ideal; the latter containing immutable essences and *real beings*, the former containing only objects drawn from the great archetypes† in the ideal world, and which, being subject to generation and corruption, to increase and diminution, are unfit to be called beings. For the same purpose, he drew out his four species and degrees of knowledge—intelligence, or the knowledge of pure essences (νοησις); the knowledge where the reasoning powers and imagery act conjointly, as in estimating the ideal of geometrical figures (διανοία); the knowledge into which *belief* entered, and by which bodies and

* See the close of the Sixth Book of Plato's Republic; a book, as Gray remarks, which can never be read too often.

† That things, both corruptible and incorruptible, are only emanations from the archetypal idea

residing in the Divine Mind, is an opinion also of Dante, who, through the medium of Latin translations, seems to have been a great reader of the Greek philosophers.

Ciò che non muore, e ciò che può muorire,

Non è se non splendor di quella idea,

Che partorisce, amando, il nostro Sire.—*Paradiso*, Cant. XIII.

their properties were to be estimated (πιστες); and that more common knowledge of his own and all other superficial times, the knowledge which lay only in *conjecture*, and whose food was, in Plato's contemptuous classification, the knowledge of the images or shadows of bodies. Ignorance he divides with equal precision into two* kinds: simple ignorance (ἀγνοια), and the ignorance which, mistaking itself for knowledge (ἀμαθια), is without hope of remedy, as long as this opinion attends it: and it is certainly a strong incentive to the desire of attaining true knowledge ourselves, and of being cautious what opinions we promulgate to others, to find such a man as Plato, laying it down as a fundamental† principle, that the wicked man sins only through ignorance, and that the end of his actions, like that of all other men, is good, but that he mistakes the nature of it, and uses wrong means to attain it. The poet, with a different, but no less powerful weapon, attacks his countrymen upon the same score. Under cover of a few compliments, without which the sovereign people of Athens were not very safely approached, he tells them to their faces that they were a set of shallow, self-conceited, assuming coxcombs; that their distinguishing feature was ignorance, and their pretended wisdom only the worst part of ignorance, excessive cunning:

* In Sophistâ.

Sophistâ. See also Gray's Works,

† In Prot. In Epist ad Dion.

v. ii. p. 361.

Fam, in Menone, in Philebo, in

he assures them that they were the dupes of every person, native or stranger, who had only the talent to discover that their feelings centered in their ears : he gives them to understand, that the great intellects, which had sprung up suddenly among them, and among whom he might have placed himself as not the least extraordinary, had only made them a sort of *parvenus* in knowledge, as the miraculous and almost incredible events of the Persian war had made them *parvenus* in the history of nations : and, drawing an image from those foolish birds whose mouths are always open, he tells them by a bold pun, the deep sense of which excuses the conceit, that they were Cechenians, and not Athenians. Such were the opinions of Plato and Aristophanes respecting the state of knowledge in their own country.

That morality should have improved under such a system of education as this, was not much to be expected ; and, in fact, as intellect advanced, if such a word is to be prostituted by application to such a species of knowledge, the public morals became deteriorated with a most alarming rapidity : how, indeed, could it be otherwise, under preceptors, such as were allowed to direct the minds of the wealthy, the young and the unsuspecting ! Like their great predecessor, Protagoras, they taught that the first and most important of all acquisitions was eloquence ; not that simple and sublime eloquence which advocates the cause of

innocence and truth, but that specious eloquence which, in the senate, the ecclesia, the courts of law, and the common intercourse of society, could steal, like the songs by which serpents were charmed, upon the ears of their auditors, and sway their minds at the will of the speaker. As the first step towards this important acquisition, the pupil was carefully initiated in all the niceties of that language, whose mazes and subtleties sometimes led from premises apparently simple, to conclusions which seemed more like legerdemain than the effects of sober reasoning. He was then told that there were two sorts of persuasion ;* that by the one an auditor's mind was imbued with actual knowledge ; by the other with a knowledge consisting only in belief and opinion : and when he asked, which of these two persuasions rhetoric was meant to create in the courts of law, and the public assemblies, on the subject of justice and injustice, he was answered, belief of knowledge without actuality ; for rhetoric was defined† to be the art of enabling an ignorant man to speak among the ignorant, with more appearance of knowledge, than the man who was actually master of the subject under discussion. By this art‡ the pupil was further instructed, that it was in his power and his duty, to make the same thing appear to the same person

* In Gorgia, p. 284.

† In Phædro, p. 351.

‡ In eodem, p. 286.

at one time just, at another unjust: that he could, by this means, in a speech to the people, make the same things appear, at this time good, at that time the reverse; nay, that if as clever as the Eleatic* Palamedes, he might make the same things appear like and unlike, one and many, in a state of quietude and in a state of motion. These lessons admirably prepared the pupil for his next degree: viz. initiation into the mystery of the †Great Beast, the *Μεγα Θρεμμα*, as that populace was significantly and contemptuously termed in private by those who did not scruple to pandar to its basest feelings in public. He was told, that this animal,—great and strong,—had certain irascible and concupiscent passions, of which it was necessary to make himself the master. He was accordingly taught to know in what way it was most expedient to approach this animal, and how to touch him—what made him difficult and what easy of access—how to discriminate between the tones which the Great Beast himself uttered, and the tones which, in others, either soothed or provoked him. All this, the neophyte was told, had, during a course of time, been collected into an art; in this art, he was assured, lay true wisdom, and this wisdom was what they (the sophists) undertook to

* By the Eleatic Palamedes was meant Alcidas, a pupil of Gorgias, (vid. Quintil. l. iii. c. 1.) and not Zenon, as Diogenes Laertius,

quoting from Plato with his too common inaccuracy, supposes. (Diog. Laert. IX. 25.)

† De Rep. lib. vi. p. 472. F. G.

teach. As to any discrimination of the passions of this animal, or any separation of the honourable, the good and the just, from the base, the bad and the unjust; it was what, they declared, they neither laid claim to themselves, nor expected from others; it was their business to shape their judgments by the instincts of the animal; calling that good, in which he delighted; that evil, with which he was displeased, and considering all as just and honourable which satisfied the necessities of nature: and what essential difference there was between that which is good in itself and good according to nature, they confessed they did not know themselves, and consequently could not communicate to others.

The higher pandects of the school were now laid open to him; and it is at once curious and painful to see how early these sophists had discovered all those dangerous doctrines, which, at subsequent periods, have been made use of by bad and designing men for the subversion of society. They asserted, on all occasions, that might makes* right; that the property of the weak belongs to the strong, and that, whatever the law might say to the contrary, the voice of nature taught and justified the doctrine. They proclaimed that the only wise† persons were those, who aspired to the direction of public affairs, and who were

* In Gorgiâ, p. 296.

† In eodem, 299.

stopped in this attempt by no other consideration than the measure of their capacity; and they added, that those who, without any command over themselves, could acquire a command over others, had a right to have their superior talent rewarded by possessing more than others; for temperance, self-restraint, and a dominion over the passions and desires, were set down by them as marks of dulness and stupidity, only calculated to excite mirth and derision. They asserted with confidence, that nature itself made it both just and honourable, that he who wished to live happily, ought to permit his desires as large a sway as possible, and in no way to restrain them: they bargained indeed for the possession of courage and political wisdom in their scholars; but once in possession of these, a man, in their opinion, was at liberty to administer to his passions in all other respects, and to leave nothing unindulged, which could contribute to their gratification. They declared, that those who attached disgrace to this doctrine, did it only from a sense of shame at wanting the means to gratify their own passions: and their praises of moderation they asserted to be mere hypocrisy, and to proceed solely from the wish of enslaving better men than themselves. With the same power of self-indulgence, said these flagitious liars, these assertors of moderation would pursue the same path as those who were now the objects of their animadversions:—they concluded, therefore, that it was ridiculous in those,

who were above restraint, to lay a restraint upon themselves, and they proclaimed in the most unqualified terms, that luxury, intemperance and licentiousness, were alone virtue and happiness, and that all other declarations were mere specious pretences,—compacts contrary to nature,—the triflings of men, who deserved no manner of consideration!

The sacred principles of justice were treated with a contempt equally daring. They often began with the bold* definition that justice itself was nothing but the interest of the strongest; that the master-piece of injustice was to appear a man of virtue without being really one: and they proceeded to prove (and in a town like Athens, the demonstration perhaps was not difficult) that on all occasions the just man came off worse than the unjust. In the mutual† compacts of private life, said they, the just man is always a loser, and the unjust a gainer. In public affairs, when a contribution is to be made, the one with equal property always contributes less than the other; whereas, when a disbursement is to be made, the former receives nothing, and the latter is a considerable gainer. If both are in office, one mischief at least happens to the just man; his private affairs go to ruin from being neglected, and the public give him no redress, merely because he is a just man; he be-

* De Rep. lib. i. p. 414. D.

† De Rep. lib. i. p. 416.

comes odious besides to his relations and his friends, because he will not, for their service, overstep the bounds of right ; whereas, to the unjust man, the very reverse, said they, is the case. To paint this more forcibly, they drew the picture of a tyranny, where the unjust man was in the highest state of felicity, the voluntarily just in the greatest state of depression ; and they proved that the former, though outraging every rule of humanity, was loaded with praises, not only those who were conscious of his crimes, but even those who had suffered by them, considering him a happy man : for if injustice, added they, is ever blamed, the blame proceeds, not from the fear of committing it, but from the fear of suffering by it. Improving upon these notions, they* declared, that to be able to commit an injury, was in itself a blessing, to receive an injury was in itself an evil ; but that there was more of ill in receiving, than there was of good in committing, and that to set this right, was the origin and object of legislation. Justice, therefore, they considered as the medium between the greatest of blessings, that of committing wrong with impunity, and the greatest evil, which consists in not being able to revenge an injury received ; and hence, according to them, was derived the common attachment to justice, not as being a blessing in itself, but because persons in a capacity to hurt others,

* De Rep. lib. ii. p. 422.

oblige them to consider it as such : for he, they continued, who has power in his hands, and is really a man, would never submit to such a convention :—it would, indeed, be complete folly to do it. Give the good man and the bad man, they triumphantly concluded, power to act as they please ; present them with rings like that of Gyges, which should make them invisible, and what will be the consequence ? The virtuous man would soon be found treading the very same path as the villain, and if he should be so “adamantine” as to act otherwise, he would be considered as the most pitiful and stupid of his species : in public, indeed, every one would eulogize his virtues ; but this would be done with a design of deceiving others, and in the fear of risking fortune, if a contrary course were pursued.

Such were some of the doctrines which, advanced with all the powers of dialectic skill, and dropping upon a soil too well fitted by an imperfect education for their reception, confused the intellects and perverted the notions of the young Athenians. But the poisonous chalice was not yet full.—As some compunctious visiting of nature might interfere, and the dread of present or future retribution (that witness of himself, which the Deity has left in all ages) might hinder the pupil from giving due effect to these pernicious precepts, the high doctors of this infernal school now took him in hand ; and in this moment of wavering and irresolution, they, with a hot iron, for ever seared the

conscience, which still retained some faint marks of tenderness and sensibility. The opinions, which he had sucked in with his nurse's and his mother's milk, the opinions which from the mouths of the same persons he had heard conveyed in the shape of serious arguments, or amusing fables,* the opinions, which he saw evinced in the numerous and imposing sacrificial rites of his country, all these opinions he was told were false; and he was required to abjure them; he, who had been witness to the victims offered to the gods by his parents, and to the prayers and supplications made to the same gods in behalf of themselves and their children, with an earnestness and a warmth which shewed the conviction of their own minds that there was some superintending Power; he, who in the prostrations and adorations of Greeks and barbarians, at the rising and setting of the two great luminaries, had either seen or heard that this persuasion was common to all people—he—was now told to give up all these notions, fitted only for the capacities of dreaming ignorance and anile superstition. He was assured, in broad open day, in the sight of that sun which he saw rising every day to run his glorious course, and in the face of that earth which he beheld covered with flowers as well as fruit, that of three things he might console himself with one;† that there were no gods, or that if there were, they took no

* Plato de Leg. l. x. p. 665. C. † In eodem lib. p. 664. C.

cognizance of human affairs, or that if they did, their connivance could be gained, and their vengeance appeased, by returning to them some of the lowest of their own gifts ;— a bull, an ox, a sheep, a little incense, or a few grains of salt. By what arguments these doctrines were supported we have neither time nor patience to mention ; and the arguments by which they were refuted, it is not surely necessary, at this time of day, to repeat ; but one argument, however uselessly it was urged, is too honourable to human nature to be altogether omitted ; and some among ourselves may, perhaps, *mutatis mutandis*, receive benefit from the ideas of an unassisted and uninspired heathen. “ My son,* (this better voice whispered to the unfortunate victim of superficial education and devilish sophistry,) you are yet young : time will make an alteration in your opinions ; and of many, which you now strongly maintain, you will hereafter advocate the very reverse : wait, therefore, till time has made you a judge of matters, so deep and so important in their nature. For that which you now think of no consequence, is, in fact, the concern of the very highest importance ; viz. the direction of life to good or bad purposes, by corresponding investigations into the nature of the heavenly powers. One thing, and that not trivial, I can at least venture, in all the confidence of truth, to assure you

* In eod. p. 665.

respecting them ; the opinions which you now entertain are not solitary opinions, first originated by you or your friends ; they are opinions which, at all times, have found advocates, more or less in number ; but I speak the language of experience when I say that not one of those who in their youth had been led to think that there were no gods, has found his old age consistent in opinion with that of his more juvenile years." Alas ! to many of these persons such an old age never came : and if the natural consequences of these damnable lessons sometimes brought moments of anguish and remorse, the effect of such feelings, when the great doctrine of Repentance had not yet been promulgated, was only to plunge the pupil into deeper sins, that he might get rid of the terrors of an upbraiding conscience !

In laying open, at such length, the manners and the doctrines of the Sophists, the reader may seem to have been drawn from the purpose for which these remarks were designed : but humour depends for its relish very frequently upon knowledge—knowledge not acquired at the moment, but knowledge fixed in the mind, and requiring little explanation ; for nobody, says a French critic, laughs, when there is need of an explanation to tell him why he ought to laugh. It is only an intimate acquaintance with the state of manners, and the habits of society in the upper classes of society in Athens, which can give the reader a full idea of the Clouds of Aristophanes. It is then only that the

full force of many of his single happy words can be understood, or those images raised in the mind which mere words are sometimes calculated to light up. But this purpose must still lie by a little longer. Some doubt has been thrown on the veracity of the author, from whose writings these remarks have chiefly been suggested or collected; and an agreeable* compiler, well known to scholars, would wish us to believe, that the master of the Academy acted the same part by the sophists of his day, as Aristophanes did by the great originator of the Grecian moral philosophy. The Dialogues of Plato do, certainly, by the introduction of living characters, speaking freely and unreservedly their most intimate thoughts, approach nearest of any thing which antiquity has left us to the modern novel, that dangerous species of literature, which has torn open all the recesses of the heart, and left† none of those sanctuaries unopened into which a person's own thoughts should fear to penetrate. But the romance-novel, that elliptic figure, within whose circumference any man's character may be drawn for the purposes of utter distortion, because reality and fiction being its admitted generating axes, one line must be made to augment, precisely as the other decreases; this was a species of literary guilt, left for the invention of our own days; and it is to be wished that it had

* Athenæus, lib. xi.

† De l'Allemagne, t. ii. p. 312.

begun with a sex, on whom it would have been less ungracious to bestow the reprobation, which such an inroad upon the peace and security of society deserves. Without adverting, then, to the difference of manners between the Greeks and ourselves, without shewing that Athenæus, in attacking the character of Plato for veracity, has left his own reputation for truth in a most* awkward predicament; after admitting, in its fullest extent, the literary jealousy of Plato, which could bear no rival near his throne, it will be sufficient to say that we possess other means of establishing the truth of his observations. If such dark and malignant spirits, as Plato describes, had been at work with such doctrines as he details, their effects would be pretty visible in the annals of the times; for what is history but opinion converted into fact? and how read we? what says the great, the matchless contemporary chronicler? "About this time," says Thucydides, (and he is speaking of the period which immediately preceded the representation of the *Clouds*,) "about this time," says Thucydides, (and his declarations may be given nearly in the words of a translator, to whom something might be added on the side of elegance, but whose closeness and fidelity few can hope to surpass) "the received value of names imposed for signification of things, began to be changed into arbitrary: for inconside-

* Animadv. in Athen. Schweighaeuseri, tom. iii. p. 218.

rate boldness was counted true-hearted manliness; prudent deliberation, a handsome fear; modesty, the cloak of cowardice; to be wise in every thing, to be lazy in every thing. A furious suddenness was reputed a point of valour. To re-advise for the better security, was held for a fair pretext of tergiversation. He that was fierce, was always trusty; and he that contraried such a one, was suspected. He that laid a snare, if it took, was a wise man; but he whose forecast discovered a snare laid, a more dangerous man than he: he that had been so prudent, as not to need to do the one or the other, was said to be a dissolver of society, and one that stood in fear of his adversary. In brief, he that could outstrip another in the doing of an ill act, or that could persuade another thereto, that never meant it, was commended. To be kin to another, was less binding than to be of his Society or Company; because these were ready to undertake the most hazardous enterprizes, and that without any pretext. For Societies* were not made upon prescribed laws of profit, but for rapine, contrary to the laws established. And as for mutual trust amongst them, it was confirmed not so much by oaths or divine law, as by the communication of guilt. And what was well advised of their adversaries, they received with an eye to their actions,

* By societies are here meant laws for the more profitable management of their trades or arts.

to see whether they were too strong for them, or not, and not ingenuously. To be revenged was in more request, than never to have received injury. And for oaths (when any were) of reconciliation, being administered in the present necessity, they were of force to such as had otherwise no power: but upon opportunity, he that first durst, thought his revenge sweeter by the trust, than if he had taken the open way. For they did not only put to account the safeness of that course, but having circumvented their adversary by fraud, they assumed to themselves withall, a mastery in point of wit. And dishonest men for the most part are sooner called able, than simple men honest. And men are ashamed of this title, but take a pride in the other. The cause of all this is desire of rule, out of avarice and ambition, and the zeal of contention from those two proceeding. Thus was wickedness on foot in every kind, *throughout all Greece*, and sincerity (whereof there is much in a generous nature) was laughed down.”*

A Tragedy of manners, thus fearful, wanted a Gracioso to relieve some of its more sombre scenes, and the character was supplied in Aristophanes.

To dispel by the powerful weapon of ridicule these mists of error,—to give a finished picture of a plain unlet-

* Hobbes's Trans. of Thucydides, lib. iii. 188.

tered man as he was likely to come from the hands* of the sophists,—to rescue the young men of family from the hands of such flagitious preceptors, and restore them to that noble simplicity of manners, which had prevailed in Greece in the time of Homer, and which had not entirely disappeared even in the days of Herodotus, was unquestionably the object of the *Clouds*;—it was a task of no ordinary kind, but the author has accomplished his purpose in one of those immortal dialogues, which, wrapped up in his own rich, mellifluous and inimitable versification, remains, to the moderns, like so many of the other great works of antiquity, at once an object of admiration† and despair. If the mode‡ in which this admirable dialogue

* A picture of this kind is admirably furnished in the *Clouds*, commencing in the original at v. 438.

† Wieland enthusiastically observes (and the author of *Oberon* has a right to be heard on a matter of taste, notwithstanding his mad inconsistencies on matters of opinion) that the imaginations of Lucian, Rabelais, Cervantes, Lopez de Vega, Sterne and Swift united, could not have produced a happier scene than this one, in which the embodied *Logos*, the representatives of the two struggling and opposing sets of opinions

in Athens, on the subjects of religion, manners, morals, music, &c. are introduced upon the stage.

‡ There can be no doubt, from the words of the scholiast, that the *Logos*, of which Mr. Cumberland's terms *Dicaeus* and *Adicus*, give so very inadequate a representation, were exhibited to the audience as two fighting cocks, in large wicker cages. Spurs of course would be provided them; and if the apologue of Prodicus, which Xenophon has so beautifully dressed up, and of which Lowth has given so manly and nervous a version, was then in being, the humour was

was conveyed, be such as to detract in our eyes, at least in some degree, from its merits, it must be remembered, that the persons for whose service it was intended, were not likely to be present at the recital of it, and that the reproof could only be dealt at second hand through the medium of a clever, but noisy, conceited, and riotous mob, who required some compensation for having the merriment of their bacchanalian anniversary disturbed by satires upon the system of public education.—It now remained for the author to give a central figure to his piece; and the same regard to the quality of his audience seems to have guided him also in this stage of his progress.

About the time* when the play called the Clouds was brought before a public audience, a person was seen in all the streets and public places of Athens, whose appearance, manners and doctrines equally tended to excite observation. If not a sophist himself, he was at least seen continually in the company of the sophists; and, as he made no scruple to practise upon† them the arts which they practised upon others, it is no wonder that an almost general opinion should have considered him as one of the profession; as a sophist

heightened by that spirit of parody, which seems to have been so agreeable to the Athenians. See on both these subjects the German Attic Museum. Zweyter Band. Erklärung II.

* Plato in Lachete, 246. D. E. F. 250, A. B.

† De Rep. L. i. 412, E. 413 A. See also the Dialogue, called Hippias Minor.

more honest indeed than the rest, but in talent, in vanity,* and self-conceit surpassing them all. Like the sophists and philosophers, he had given himself deeply and unremittedly to physical† researches: and in a temperament naturally melancholy, it had produced such an effect upon his countenance and manners, that by the gayer part of his fellow-citizens, who wanted opportunities of knowing him more intimately, an introduction to his society was considered as something like venturing into the sombre cavern of Trophonius.‡ And certainly there were not wanting reasons for forming such an opinion. Wrapt up in profound reveries, the ordinary functions of nature seemed sometimes suspended in him—the vicissitudes of day and night passed unobserved, the necessary refectations of rest and food were neglected, and he seemed to have derived from his own experience the reproach which he sometimes cast upon the other philosophers, that their native town had only possession of their bodies, but that the air was the chosen habitation of their minds. (The pride of knowledge communicated a consequence which contrasted rather ridiculously with the humility of his external appearance;) his

* Le Jeune Anach. tom. v. p. 490.

† Arist. Nub. v. 509.

§ In Convivio Plat. 316 B.

‡ In Phædono, 392. CORR. 335 C.

Xen. 85, 6. Xen. Mem. l. iv. cap. 7.

air was stern,* his step was lofty, and his eyes, if not fixed upon the heavens, were thrown around with an appearance of conscious importance. He was rather ostentatious in proclaiming that his father had been a statuary,† his mother a midwife;‡ and he explained, in language highly ingenious, but rather more at length, perhaps, than was consistent with good taste, (and certainly in terms which only a degraded state of female estimation would allow to be called decent,) that the profession, which his mother had practised, was that which he also pursued; with this difference, that he performed for the intellect, what she had done for the body; and that while she confined her attentions to the female sex, his obstetric services had been devoted exclusively to the male. (In his more convivial moments he had a term,§ by which he chose to characterize his pursuit, that requires still more circumlocution in mentioning; it will be sufficient to say, that it came nearest to that office, which is considered the most degrading that one man can perform for another; and he who had accidentally seen the author§ of it, coquetting with a grey-bearded brother in philosophy, and aping the manners of a

* In Phæd. 402 B. Conv. Plat. 335 F. in Nub. v. 363.

† In Acibiade primo. 36. In Theæteto, 117.

‡ Conv. Xenoph. 70. 80.

§ Conv. Xen. p. 86. The paraphrastic translation of the word *ὑπερβολικὸς* is given from Gray, whose erudition was as exact as his genius was sublime.

courtezan who denies, only to be courted to do, what she wishes, might have been justified in thinking, till circumstances had better informed him, that the pretended office was not merely assumed for the purposes of momentary pleasantry. By whatever name, however, he chose to term his vocation, certain it was, that no man could be more assiduous in the prosecution of it.) Whoever was the disputant, or whatever the subject of conversation, the discourse finally fell upon the head of the person with whom he was conversing. Armed with a divine* commission, as he pretended, for that purpose, and himself under the immediate direction of a supernatural being, not perfectly naturalized in the theology of his country, every man was questioned by him in turn, and found not† respite, till he gave a complete account of himself:—what was his present and what had been his past mode of life,—and once upon this topic, said one who knew him well, there is no hope of escape, till you have been put to the touchstone torture, and your whole life sifted to the bottom. So strong was this passion, that the attachment to rural scenes, which prevailed so strongly in most of his fellow-citizens, in him seemed a feeling almost extinct—he was a stranger to the environs‡ of Athens, and was scarcely ever seen outside the

* In Apol. 364. D.

† In Phædro, 338.

‡ In Lachete, 249.

walls. He could gain no instruction, he declared, from fields and trees, and nothing but a book could entice him to the banks of the Ilyssus, or that more beautiful stream, where Vettus* quenched her thirst, and in return blew over it the sweetest breath of the Zephyrs, and sent the Loves to be the companions of wisdom. Man was his game; and from man he never wished to be absent; but the passion was by no means reciprocal: a catechist so inquisitorial was not always agreeable, and the presence of the philosopher either created a solitude† where he went, or if he collected an audience, it was among the idle‡ young men; who took a malicious pleasure in his cutting remarks, and who immediately left him to practise upon others the lessons which they had just received. In a town where the personal appearance of the male sex excited more comments and observation than the female, even the exterior of this person was calculated to fix the attention of many, who were not disposed to penetrate beyond it; and whatever merriment was excited on this subject, it must be owned that himself was ever the first to set the joke afloat. His eyes (to use the words in which he§ was accustomed to draw his own figure, and in which it will be necessary to follow him, for purposes that will appear hereafter) stood

* Euripides in *Medea*, 835.

† In *Apol.* 361. D.

‡ Xen. *Mem. lib. iv. c. 2. p. 313.*

§ *Convivium Xen. Oxon. 82, 3.*

so forward in his head, that they enabled him not only to see straight before him, but even to look sideways; and he used in consequence to boast, that himself and a crab were, of all other animals, the two best adapted for vision. As his eyes took in a larger field of vision, so his nostrils, from standing wide open, were formed to embrace a larger compass of smell. His nose, too, from its extreme depression, had in like manner its advantages; for, had it been aquiline, instead of what it was, it might have stood like a wall of separation between his eyes, and thus have obstructed their vision. His mouth and his lips were equally subjects of pleasantry with him, and the latter, with reference to subjects, to which the decorousness of modern manners does not admit much allusion. With a view to reduce the periphery of his body, which certainly was not very exact in its proportions, he practised dancing, and that down to a very advanced period of life; not merely to the occasional discomfiture of serious reflection in his pupils, but even to the excitement of a doubt in them, whether their master was quite correct in his senses:—to close this, not very agreeable part of the subject:—when these pupils likened his whole exterior to that of the Sileni,† no doubt of the truth was ever expressed, and no umbrage taken as at a supposed affront. Though little distinguished for beauty

* In Conv. Xen. 66, 67.

† In Conv. Plat. 333. et alibi.

himself, some of the handsomest young men of Athens were seen continually in his train: and (while) they did not scruple to take the utmost liberty in expressing their opinion upon his deformity,* he did not perhaps altogether find his advantage in gazing upon their beauty; for it led to the objection, which the warmest† of his admirers either did not attempt to deny, or found it necessary to palliate, that it led him sometimes to clothe the noblest operations and aspirations of the mind in the language of the senses, that it engaged him to arrive at mental through corporeal excellence, and made it appear, that the presence of the beautiful Agathon,‡ or the interesting Autolycus§ was necessary, before the philosopher could arrive at the essential beauty, the *αυτο καὶ αὐτο*, his reveries about which must have become sometimes a little fatiguing to the most admiring of his auditors. With these persons, who were never many|| in number, of whom the more ambitious¶ deserted their master as soon as they had gained the object which brought them into his society, and others of whom left him to form schools, whose names have since been

* In Conv. 333.

§ In Convivio Xenophontis.

† Maximus Tyrius, Diss. XXIV.
XXV. XXVI. XXVII. Xen. Mem.
lib. iv. c. 1.

|| In Gorgia, 296. H.

¶ Xen. Mem. lib. i. chap. 2.
§ 16.

‡ In Convivio Platonis.

synonymous with sophistry,* the coarsest effrontery,† and the most undisguised voluptuousness,‡ the greatest part of his time was spent; for the civil duties which occupied the hours of others were avocations which he chose wholly to decline: he never made part of the General Assembly;§ he never frequented the Courts of Law;|| and the awkward manner¶ in which he performed the externals of a senator, when necessity or accident brought him into the situation, shewed that neither practice nor reflexion had made him acquainted with the duties of the office. Even that duty which seemed peculiarly connected with his office of a public teacher, that of committing to writing the result of his studies, or giving a lasting habitation to those important disputations in which he was continually engaged, was a task which he declined, and for which he had framed reasons, which, however satisfactory to himself,** have by no means been equally so to those who have lived after him. To himself, however, one very satisfactory consequence resulted from these derelictions, as some did not hesitate to call them, of the duties of a citizen: it left him the most

* The Megarian school under Euclid. Diog. Laert. lib. ii. in vit. Eucl.

† The Cynic school under Antisthenes. Diog. Laert. lib. vi. in vit. Antist.

‡ The Cyrenaic school under

Aristippus. Diog. Laert. lib. ii. in vit. Arist.

§ In Apol. 365. A. B.

|| In Apol. Socr. 358. F.

¶ In Gorgia, 292.

** In Phædro, 357. apud Stobæi Sermones, Ser. 21. p. 387.

unlimited leisure for frequenting, what seemed his peculiar delight, the schools of the sophists, and engaging in disputation with those fallacious pretenders to universal knowledge. If there were some points in which the sophists and himself had a certain similarity, there were many of a trifling, and still more of a serious nature, in which they were diametrically opposite. While the sophists went clad in magnificent garments, he appeared in the most plain and simple apparel. The same coat served him for winter* and summer, and he preserved the old-fashioned manner of his country in going always barefooted:† he frequented the baths‡ but rarely, and never indulged in the usual luxury of perfumes.§ While the sophists confined themselves to the sons of the wealthy and the great, and were therefore known to them and them only, he did not disdain to frequent the meanest of the artisans, to converse with them in their own language,|| and on topics with which they were most familiar. There was even a class in society still more degraded, which he did not scruple occasionally to visit,¶

* In Conv. Plat. 335.

† In Phædro, 337.

‡ Arrian. Epict. de Mundit. accounts for this abstinence, by a reason, which might have justified Cujas the celebrated lawyer, Alexander the Great, and Lord Herbert of Cherbury, in a similar piece

of abstinence: viz. a peculiar sweetness of body, which rendered ablution unnecessary, and perfumes superfluous.

§ Xen. Conv. 64.

|| Xen. Mem. lib. iii. c. 10.

¶ Xen. Mem. lib. iii. c. 11.

and to evince, by his instructions, that there was no class of society whose pursuits had wholly escaped his scrutinising eye. The effect of these visits was very evident in his language, and those who felt themselves annoyed by his railery, or pressed by his acuteness, did not fail to throw into his face the shipwrights,* the cobblers, the carpenters and weavers, with whom his habits of intercourse were not unfrequent, and from whom he was so fond of drawing those maxims and comparisons, which confounded the class of persons, to whose annoyance and discomfiture he seems to have devoted the greatest portion of his time. It is the language of the chivalrous ages, which would best do justice to this part of his character : and the knight, locked up in complete armour, and ready to run a-tilt with the first person he met, is the completest image of this philosopher, preparing to encounter the sophists, at once apparently his enemies and his rivals.

Every age, however, has expressions and images in which it can stamp any strong feeling ; and the sophists, without the power of recurring to the language of knighthood, had many significant terms, by which they could express the Quixotism of this redoubted opponent. They compared him at first to the Spartans,† who, if any one approached their palæstræ or places of public exercise, obliged

* Hipp. Maj. 98 F. Gorg. 299 † Theætetus, p. 125.
B. Conv. 335. G.

the intruder to make choice between immediately retiring or joining in the exercises of which he was a spectator. But they recollected that this was conceding too much, and they corrected their position by placing their rival in the same rank with the Scirons and Antæusses, who let no passer-by escape them without a previous encounter. To ask questions* or to answer them—to convict or to be convicted—were, in his own words, the great purposes for which men should meet together; and a person, who had decreed that his life should be a complete logomachy, could not have come to the contest better prepared; nor, where† words were to be the weapons of warfare, could any man draw them from a better-provided armory. That a person possessed of so powerful a weapon should sometimes have been a little too much delighted with the use of it, is no subject of wonder. His hearers described the effect of it upon themselves as resembling the effects of witchery and enchantment: they compared it to the touch of the torpedo, which causes a numbness in the faculties. Much was affirmed by him, and little proved—both sides of a question were alternately taken, and the result left upon his hearers' minds was, that he himself was in doubt,‡ and only excited doubts in others. The sophists, indeed, by

* In Prot. 208 F.

† In Menone 16. C. D.

‡ See the whole of the dialogue called Cratylus.

the manner in which they were handled, were made, *especially in hot* weather*, to perspire more copiously than, perhaps, was agreeable; for their subtleties were met with niceties still more acute than their own, and they were entrapped into admissions of which they did not foresee the consequence; but their falsehoods were also combated with positions which he who advanced them would have been unwilling to have had considered as decidedly his own, and in pursuing them into their dark recesses his own gigantic powers could not altogether save him from the reproach which he cast upon another: “the best divers only should venture to plunge into a sea of such prodigious depth.” Such was the person whom Aristophanes selected to be the hero of his *Clouds*. Those who are acquainted with Grecian affairs only through the medium of history, will, not, perhaps, recognise in this picture the celebrated son of Sophroniscus; and, were no other traits added to the above portrait, men of deeper research might justly complain that it shewed no reluctance to exhibit the darker shades, and much inability to describe the brighter parts of a philosopher, whose virtues and whose intellect, in spite of some drawbacks still more serious† than any which have

* De Rep. lib. i. 419. E.

† See nearly the whole of the fifth book of the Republic. It was not possible to allude to this part

of the writings of Plato and not immediately drop the mask, which, perhaps, has been worn too long in the preceding description of the

hitherto been mentioned, have been justly allowed to form an epoch in the history of man.

son of Sophroniscus ; but whoever rises from the perusal of this stain upon a work, otherwise almost faultless, will feel it necessary to relieve his own feelings by an indignant protest against this portion of its contents. In this *lying* book it is announced that a woman's virtue will serve her instead of a robe, that the useful is the measure of the honourable, and that there is nothing shameful but what is hurtful ; and upon these flimsy pretences the same outrage upon the feelings, by the exhibition of the sex in the exercises of the palæstra, as obtained in Sparta, is recommended for practice in a Utopian form of government. In this *absurd* book man is considered as an animal, whose actions, on the tenderest points, are to be determined by the pleasure of the law ; as a physical agent, whose proceedings in those contracts, where nature tells us our own will ought to have the greatest share, are made to depend solely upon the will of the magistrate. In this most *unfeeling* book all the great ties of our condition—parental, filial, and connubial—are proposed

to be severed at a blow ; nature, it appears, having made a mistake in investing us with such feelings ; or the philosopher forgetting that our feelings become enfeebled in proportion as they are carried beyond their limits, and that they may be carried so far as to become less than nothing. In this *guilty* book lying is made a statutable, constitutional branch of duty in the first magistrates of the state—the promiscuous concubinage of the sexes is established as a fundamental law of society, and exposition of children, suppression and abortion, are set down, not among things permitted, but among things enjoined. There is a respect due to the public ear, and it becomes us to proceed no farther : the feelings of sickness and of loathing, which some further matter in the book would infallibly excite, may well be spared. And all this is to take place in a state which is set up as a model of perfection ! And, as if to add mockery to insult, the propositions are made with pleasantry and *en badinant* ; and the promulgator of them charitably demands, that, if they cannot be reduced to

Having thus got his central figure, the attention of the author was next turned to that most peculiar part of the ancient drama, the CHORUS. It has been remarked by W. Schlegel as one of the peculiarities of Aristophanes, that he is fond of adopting a metaphor literally, and exhibiting it in this way before the eyes of the spectators.* As a person given to abstraction and solitary speculation is proverbially said to have his head in the clouds, it was but another step, therefore, in the poet's creative mind to make the clouds the chorus of his piece; as of the person, whose abstractions and reveries seemed to make him most conversant with them, he had formed the hero of the piece. By this contrivance the author wove into his performance the mob

practice, their author may be put upon a footing with those idle persons who entertain themselves agreeably with their reveries, and feed upon them merely for the purpose of dissipating the ennui of solitude! Upon whom the guilt of them rests—upon the teacher or the scholar—it is not now possible to say; they are put into the mouth of Socrates by Plato, and we should hardly think that he could have ventured upon ascribing

such opinions to his master, if there had not been some authority^a for such a proceeding.

* All early literature, in fact, is fond of these associations. We may turn to every page almost of the *Inferno* of Dante for examples. The schismatics, in the 28th Canto, who walk "*Fessi nel volto dal mento al ciuffetto*," and the headless trunk, which bears its head in the hand, "*Perch' i' parti' così giunte persone*," occur instantly.

^a The reader who wishes to come to some conclusion on this point, will do well to consider attentively the chronological and other inferences, derivable from Aristotle's *Politics*, l. ii. cc. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.; from his *Ethics*, lib. vii. c. 7. ad fin. and a short notice in Gray's *Works*, v. ii. p. 504.

(no inconsiderable body in Athens) who assisted the sophists in the perversion of the public mind—

The fortune-tellers,
Quacks, medicine-mongers, bards bombastical,
Chorus-projectors, star-interpreters,
And wonder-working cheats.

The effect of this personification in the original theatre was no doubt very striking. A solemn invocation calls down the CLOUDS from their ethereal abode—their approach is announced by thunder—they chaunt a lyric ode as they descend to the earth, and, after wakening attention by a well-managed delay, they are brought personally on the stage as a troop of females, “habited,” says Mr. Cumberland, “no doubt in character, and floating *cloud-like* in the dance.” All this we can easily conceive; but a more curious part of their duty must be left to be supplied (and that but very imperfectly) by the imagination. Recitation was not the only part which the chorus had to perform; a great share of their office lay in their feet, as well as in their tongue, and both author and actor were expected to be great proficient, the former in the composition, the latter in the practice, of those movements and evolutions which, as we find Aristotle classing them with poetry, music and painting, and Lucian terming them a **science of imitation and exhibition, which explained the*

* See the very learned Enquiry Symbolical Language of Ancient
of R. P. Knight, Esq. into the Art and Mythology. p. 152.

conceptions of the mind, and certified to the organs of sense things naturally beyond their reach, we may easily conceive to have consisted of something more than the elegant movements which now go under the name of dancing. Had the treatises of Sophocles and Aristocles on the subject of the CHORUS come down to us, or had those statues not been lost from which ideas of the attitudes of the ancient dancers might have been collected, (for every movement of the body, we are given to understand by Athenæus, was observed, in order to collect those gestures which might afford a concert for the eye, modulated upon that which was at the same time presented to the ear,) we might have spoken with more confidence on what must now remain a subject full of perplexity and obscurity. As all dancing, however, among the Greeks was of the mimetic kind, whatever was the nature of the tragic dance, we may be sure that the comic dance stood in the same relation of parody to it, as the comedy itself of the ancients did to their tragedy; and to have enjoyed the mimetic movements of the cordax, or dance of comedy, we ought to have witnessed in the tragic* chorus those movements, whose general name

* The author understood this best from witnessing, in the beautiful theatre at Stutgard, a representation of Schiller's *Bride of Messina*. It was substituting, in-

deed, the ear for the eye, and sound in the place of motion; but the senses easily transfer their feelings from one to another. In that most splendid testimony of Schil-

(emmeleia) implies accordance and a modulated harmony in the play of the characters. How far this mimetic province of the dance was called into action by the CHORUS of the Clouds, what steps* were used in their parabases to give effect to the rhythm,† what pauses in the metre‡ were

ler's genius, modelled, I need scarcely observe, upon the drama of the ancients, and which might, in many of its parts, be mistaken for a recovered piece of antiquity, the Chorus makes a very distinguished figure, and, on a person conversant with the writings of antiquity, it cannot fail to make a most powerful impression. The effect of a number of human voices intonating the same sentiments, in the same words, the same tone, the same inflexion of voice, and in the same modulated cadences, is something which, to be well understood, must have been heard. The prophetic forebodings of the chorus, towards the close of the piece,—their *Weh! Wehe! Wehe!* have not yet departed from my ears; and I have never since read a chorus or parabasis of Aristophanes without feeling the humour increased tenfold, by the reflexion, that on the Greek stage its native wit would have been

heightened by the triple parody of diction, sound and motion.

* The scholar will refer to the passage of Aristotle here alluded to: it occurs in the third section of his Poetics: *καὶ γὰρ ἄνθρωποι (ὅς τινος ὀρχήσαντες) διὰ τὴν σχηματικὴν ποικίλην ἰσχυρίζονται καὶ ἡδὴ καὶ πᾶσι καὶ πράξεις;* ‘there are dancers who, by rhythm applied to gesture, express manners, passions and actions.’ For the seeming inaccuracy of the expression consult Mr. Twining’s notes on the passage.

† As mistakes are apt to occur in the use of these two words, the following definitions of them, from the acute author of “Philological Inquiries” are subjoined.

Rhythm differs from metre in as much as rhythm is proportion, applied to any motion whatever: metre is proportion, applied to the motion of words spoken. Thus in the drumming of a march or the dancing of a hornpipe, there is rhythm, though no metre; in Dry-

supplied by action, what gestures at once aided and gave life to the music, and in what manner the metaphysical speculations of the sophists, which, resting on no ground of experience, floated about in the kingdom of possibilities without any definite shape or body,—how far all this was ridiculed by appropriate movements and evolutions, must now be left to the fancy: we may be sure, however, that the fruitful mind of the poet who invented one of the most powerful and graceful metres* in the Greek language, would not be deficient in giving effect to his mental creations by all the effects of scenic decoration, and all the additions of costume, music, and dancing.† In this union of

den's celebrated ode there is metre as well as rhythm, because the poet with the rhythm has associated certain words. And hence it follows, that though all metre is rhythm, yet all rhythm is not metre.

* The Aristophanic tetrameter. In its happy mixture of anapestic and spondaic feet, this metre combines a degree of strength and playfulness which no other language can hope to reach. It is the want of a metre of this kind, which makes every scholar feel a sensible deficiency in Mr. Cumberland's translation of the *Clouds*, where it not only tends to destroy

the poetical effect, but assists in giving a wrong idea of the feelings under which the original play was primarily composed.

† Those who are conversant with the works of antiquity (and more particularly with the writings of Plato, Aristotle and Lucian) are well aware, that each of these subjects might afford matter for a treatise and not for the scanty notices which the limits of this publication allow. On the subject of the latter more particularly, even the graceful dancer (Deshayes), whose retirement has, now for some years, made as great a void in the attractions of the Operatic

talents lay the great merit and difficulty of the ancient dramatists ; and in this lies the depressing part of those who endeavour to give the public an idea of their works by translation. Conscious of what ought to be done, and what they know never can be done, the unfinished appearance of their labours throws a damp upon their toils, and they relinquish a work in despair, where they feel that their happiest efforts can only be a species of galvanism, giving motion to a muscle, to a leg, to an arm, but impotent and powerless to breathe the breath of life into the whole.

We have now gone through what appears to have been the object of this very singular drama, the *Clouds*, and the process by which it was moulded into the form it now bears. The author might surely be pardoned for supposing that a piece thus carefully and laboriously constructed would have met with a reception far more flattering than had attended any of his former plays. We know, however, from his own confession, which is certainly more valid than *Mad^e. Dacier's* conjectures, that this was not the case ; that the prize of victory was assigned to the *Wine Flask of Cratinus*, (that *Cratinus* who collected his declining powers to shew a youthful and not altogether forbearing rival, that

ballet, as that of the most accomplished of actors has done in the classic and more dignified departments of the drama, even he would

be startled were we to mention the twentieth part of what was expected by the ancients from a perfect dancer and mime.

he could still contest the palm with him,) and to the Conus of the cold and spiritless Ameipsias. This was sufficiently mortifying; and the author, by his frequent complaints, shewed that he felt it to be so. Had Aristophanes been aware that the loss of his reputation with a great portion of posterity would also be the price of the exhibition, we must suppose him to have been without the feelings of a man, if we imagine that the temporary defeat at Athens could have been any thing in the balance to him, compared with the severe judgment which modern writers in general have passed upon the author of the Clouds. Upon what ground these decisions took place, and whether the poet's contemporaries acted towards him with candour, or posterity with a just knowledge of the subject, it now remains for us to consider. It may, upon investigation, appear that the wit of the Clouds may be relished without diminishing any of the respect justly due to Socrates, and that Aristophanes, for this piece, as well as others, is more entitled to our gratitude than common readers are at all aware of. It will be as well to begin with the failure of the piece at the time of its exhibition.

When we talk of a piece failing in our own country, every body knows what is meant; the taste of the writer and the taste of the audience, it is immediately understood, were at variance, and the sentiments of the latter, pretty unequivocally expressed, obliged the former to withdraw the ob-

noxious object from further obtrusion upon public notice. This does not altogether answer to the case of a dramatic failure among the Greeks. With them, a contributor to their scenic exhibitions (and we shall betray an entire ignorance of the manners of antiquity, if our imaginations place him, altogether, in the same scale of estimation with those who devote their talents to the same difficult pursuit in modern times) had two or three distinct sets of enemies to encounter—the archon,* with whom lay the power of rejecting his piece in the first instance; the audience, to whom, after permission obtained from the ruling magistrate, it was presented; and thirdly, the critical overseers (*κριται*), whose business it was, under the restrictions of a solemn oath, to adjudge the prize of victory, (a victory† sought with an eagerness of competition of which we can scarcely form a conception,) to what they thought the most distinguished of the competing pieces. The audience and the umpires, it will easily be imagined, were not always unanimous in their opinion; the judges sometimes favouring, and the spectators condemning, or the latter applauding and the

* Arist. in Ranis, v. 94. Schol. ibid. *Le Jeune Anach.* t. vi. p. 74.

† The more serious excitements to victory are inserted in a note, in the comedy of the Knights, (p. 202.) which describes the office of Choregus; a superb banquet, given

by the triumphant tribe to their successful poet, it may be presumed had also its effect. We find the great comic poet alluding to this custom in more than one of his plays.

former disapproving. Which party favoured the Clouds? If we listen to Ælian,* whose testimony however stands amid such a tissue of falsehoods, that his opinion is scarcely worth a reference, the Clouds appeared so delicious to the ears of the audience, that they applauded as no audience ever applauded before; they cried† out that the victory belonged to Aristophanes, and they ordered the judges to inscribe his name accordingly. If this story be true, the fall of the piece, which consisted in not gaining the dramatic crown, must be ascribed to the presiding critics, and we should have to account why *they* were at variance with the audience: and this would be no very difficult task. How many‡ the judges were on these occasions, and how they

* Varia Historia, lib. ii. c. 13. p. 85.

† The tumult of an Athenian audience at the theatres is described with great spirit in the French Anacharsis. The facts are collected from various ancient authors; and they form the best comment on what Plato somewhere calls the Theatrocracy of Athens. "On le voit par degrés murmurer sourdement, rire avec éclat, pousser des cris tumultueux contre l'acteur, l'accabler de sifflets, frapper des pieds pour l'obliger de quitter la scène, lui faire ôter son masque pour jouir de sa honte,

ordonner au héraut d'appeler un autre acteur qui est mis à l'amende s'il n'est pas présent, quelquefois même demander qu'on inflige au premier des peines déshonorantes. Ni l'âge, ni la célébrité, ni de longs services ne sauraient le garantir de ces rigoureux traitemens. De nouveaux succès peuvent seuls l'en dédommager; car dans l'occasion on bat des mains, et l'on applaudit avec le même plaisir et la même fureur.' Le Jeune Anach. t. vi. p. 92.

‡ Barthélemy, speaking on this subject, (and he cannot be accused of wanting diligence in his re-

were appointed, ancient authors have not left us any very satisfactory intelligence; but that they were not always correct in their critical opinions, the well-known anecdotes of Philemon and Menander, among many others, sufficiently testify; and that this incorrectness did not always proceed from mere error in judgment, we find Aristophanes pretty clearly hinting,* and Xenophon, in his Symposium, very plainly declaring. Now if the judge in the theatre was, like the dicast in the courts of law, not inaccessible to a bribe, we may easily believe, that the sophists and their friends, among whom must be classed the sons and relatives of all the richest men in Athens, and who had possessed interest enough but three or four years before to shut up the comic theatre altogether, would not be idle in taking

searches,) says, "Il ne m'a pas été possible de fixer le nombre des juges; j'en ai compté quelquefois cinq, quelquefois sept, et d'autres fois davantage." t. vi. p. 75. De Pauw speaks with the same uncertainty as to the number of judges appointed for these solemn decisions. *Recherches Philosophiques*, t. i. p. 184.

* In Avibus, 1102. "Jamais on ne vit," says the author last quoted, "des décisions comparables aux décisions de ce tribunal-là: souvent il rejetoit avec mépris les plus

grands chef-d'œuvres d'Euripide et de Ménandre, et couronnoit les pièces les plus absurdes et les plus ridicules. Il faut, dit Elie, que de deux choses il en soit nécessairement arrivé une: ou les juges du théâtre d'Athènes se laissoient aveugler par une grande partialité, ou ils se laissoient corrompre par une grande somme de drachmes antiques. Mais il me paroît, qu'ils n'étoient pas aussi souvent frappés de vertige qu'éblouis par l'éclat de l'argent, malgré le vain appareil de leur serment."

every means to quash an opponent, who had already given proofs that he could deal blows, if not harder, at least more effective, than even those which the strong-handed Cratinus had administered. If that intimacy too subsisted between Socrates and Alcibiades, which Plato would make us believe, but which Xenophon, so often at variance with his great fellow-pupil of the Socratic school, almost denies,* we may believe that this young person, the most intemperate, insolent, and violent, according to the latter, of all the young men of rank in Athens, would bestir himself in favour of a preceptor, who, if he could not gain his affections by his lessons of virtue and wisdom, had at least a claim upon his gratitude for having the preceding year saved his life in battle.† But there are reasons to make us disagree with Ælian, and oblige us to think that it was the audience, and not the judges, to whom must be ascribed the ill success of the piece. There can be no doubt that the Clouds failed, and there is as little doubt that the author re-cast his piece with the intention of bringing it before the audience a second time;—that it was so brought, the acutest modern‡ critics seem to doubt. By some curious accident, |

* In Mem. l. i. c. 2. §§ 14, 15, 16.

† Plat. in Conv. 335. D.

‡ Die Wolken von Wieland. Erläuterung vii. Brunck, when settling the chronology of the

Aristophanic comedies, observes: eodem anno Nubes emendatas docuit aut docere *in animo habuit*; nam in scenam eas productas fuisse *incerta opinio est*.

it so happens that the play originally condemned has come down to us with *part of a parabasis (or address to the audience) evidently intended for the second. The author here complains pretty bitterly (for Aristophanes was clearly a man of warm feelings) of the injustice which had been done to this most elaborate of all his performances; but he no where hints at the judicial overseers as the occasion of its failure; on the contrary, the reproach is directed against the spectators, and from the epithet he attaches to them, we may see that it was a class of spectators not usually found in the comic theatre. The nature of the poet's subject, and the unusual labour, which, as he intimates more than once, he had bestowed upon the composition of it, had evidently led him to reckon upon an audience of a somewhat higher description than usual; and as the keenest amateur of the Théâtre François sometimes deserts the sublime acting of Talma for the inimitable buffooneries of †Potier and Brunet, so Aristophanes seems to have thought that he might reasonably calculate upon

* Mr. Cumberland, who was not aware of this circumstance, has been led into some errors by it in his translation of the Clouds. The learned Madame Dacier, whose enthusiastic admiration of Aristophanes led her, if I remember right, to peruse his "Clouds"

no less than two hundred times, (being precisely the same number of lections as Al-farabi is said to have given to the rhetoric of Aristotle,) has fallen into the same mistake.

† Of the Théâtre des Variétés.

having, for once at least, the gentlemen of Athens (the καλοῖ καὶ γαῖοι) among his hearers. That they did attend, and that they assisted in the demolition of the piece with the less enlightened of the audience, is pretty clearly intimated in the poet's own words.

ταὐτ' ἐν ὑμῖν μιμφομαι

τοῖς σοφοῖς, ὧν ἕνεκ' ἔγωγε ταὐτ' ἐπραγματιυμένη.

In his play of the succeeding year, the Wasps, Aristophanes again complains of the failure of his Clouds, and mentions the direct reason of its failure, viz. a novelty of invention, which the audience had not the merit* to appreciate. Had we not this direct testimony of the author, our researches would have led us to this very conclusion. The subject of the Clouds turned upon one of the most serious and important considerations in human affairs, the science of education: and what connection was there between this and the Dionysian Festival, where every one came to be amused; where he who laughed loudest was the merriest, and he that laughed longest was the wisest? Why were the Athenian rabble to be cheated of their Bacchanalian festivity, and to be passed off with a lecture, which, though conveyed through the medium of two fighting cocks, had yet something too serious in it, to be sufficiently piquant for an Athenian audience just ripe for all the nonsense of holiday

* See the conclusion of the Parabasis in Vespis. Ἀλλ' ἴτε χαίροντες.

revelry? What was it to them how the education of the higher classes was conducted; or what did they care for the opinions of Protagoras or Polus, of Prodicus or Gorgias? The persons and the sentiments of these fashionable sophists would be equally unknown, it is most probable, to the greater part of such an audience as generally filled the comic theatres at Athens. To add to this unfortunate choice of subject, Aristophanes added another error, viz. an unfortunate choice of time; for he selected for his representation of the *Clouds* that particular festival, when strangers as well as natives were admitted to the theatrical entertainments, and when of the thirty thousand spectators who were present, half, at least, were probably strangers. And what was Socrates, the son of Sophroniscus, the statuary,* and Phænaret, the midwife, to them? Pericles and Cleon were names familiar to their ears, and any hint upon the subject of politics, obtained through the introduction of them upon the stage, was abundantly grateful; but what had they to do with an obscure philosopher, whose name was hardly known in his own native town, and the introduction of whom upon the stage, as the hero of a piece,

* Sophroniscus is somewhere mentioned by Lucian as an hermoglyphist; a person, whose business it was to engrave inscriptions on marble, or rather on the Hermaic statues. The profession of the father of Socrates would, according to this, rank between the sculptor and the common stonemason.

was an honour which had perhaps never before been conferred upon a person of his rank in life, and which his envious and jealous peers were not likely to see bestowed without extreme jealousy and ill-will? Strangers would naturally ask, as we learn from *Ælian** they actually did—Who is this Socrates? and if, as that same author relates, Socrates stood up in the theatre to gratify the curiosity thus excited, it will be no uncharitable remark to impute it, partly, to his sense of the opportunity thus offered for gaining a name in society, an advantage which, to a person of his pursuits in life, was of incalculable importance. This is, perhaps, sufficient to shew upon what general grounds the *Clouds* fell; but there are also some particular ones, which might not be without a share in its rejection. In his play of the preceding year, (the *Demagogues*,) *Aristophanes* had passed some severe †sarcasms upon his countrymen for their general ingratitude to their comic poets; and though the extraordinary merit of the performance had carried the poet successfully through at the time, the Athenians, when their enthusiasm was over, were not a people likely to forget the affront, nor to let it pass with impunity. A rival bard, whose name had been introduced into that performance, furnished them, on the following year, with the triple means of indemnifying themselves, of rewarding

* *Varia Hist.* l. ii. c. 13. p. 89. † See p. 201—207 in this volume.

an old favourite, and reducing the pride of a young competitor. Cratinus, in short, whom Aristophanes had considered as a man past his labours, resented the affronts put upon him; and in return for a train of somewhat suspicious compliment, not without a hint or two at infirmities which intemperance had created, he brought forward a comedy, called the Wine Flask, the subject of which was founded on his young rival's allusions; and to this piece, more suited in its nature and its allusions to a Bacchanalian festival than discussions upon education, the prize of victory, as we learn by the Didascalæ, was adjudged.

With candid and discerning readers, the present writer feels no doubt that the way has already been paved for the justification of Aristophanes by the preceding remarks, and that many errors, which might have arisen in their minds from confounding the ancient drama with the modern, (than which no two things can be more dissimilar,) have been altogether removed. It is not for him to tell them what inferences are to be drawn from the circumstances which have been incidentally mentioned,—that Aristophanes did not invent the Old Comedy, but found it ready made to his hands—that in his satirical* and even his inde-

* Το σκαμμμα μέρος τι εδοκινετης
 ιορτης και ο θεος ισως χαιρει, φιλογελως
 τις αυ. Lucian in Piscatore, v. 3. p.
 144. The Athenians were, in fact,

at all times, (independently of their
 Bacchanalian festivals,) a race of
 scoffers. Their comic poets ex-
 ceed their tragic in a very large

cent* vein he acted upon established principles ; principles which, however inconsistent with our notions upon such subjects, found sanction in the very religion of the times. The information given respecting the masks has apprised them, that the audience came to the exhibition with a previous knowledge that they were to consider what they saw

ratio ; and a nation must have been far gone in mirth, which thought it necessary to exact an oath of the grave Archon, that he had not written a comedy. They, who trace the wars of Louis XIV. to an ill-constructed window, and the politics of Queen Anne's court to a cup of tea thrown over Mrs. Masham's gown, will not fail to see the Greek propensity to slander rather than panegyric, even in the metrical canons of their dramas. It was sufficient for the most elevated person to have an unfortunate combination of syllables in his name, to prevent him from furnishing matter for the delicate mouth of the Tragic Muse ; but comedy bouted him, under every species of refractory appellation. In the trochaic tetrameter, he could be introduced as a dactyl, and even in the place of the regular *dipodia*, he was served up as a choriambus, or an Ionic *à minore*. The persecuted anapest, which was

so cautiously admitted into the iambic *senarius*, found a city of refuge with the comic poets ; and when vituperation was to be dealt, it did not of necessity follow with *them*, that the catalectic *dipodia* or *καταλειπ* of the iambic tetrameter, should be a bacchius. See an elaborate and learned article on this subject in the Edinburgh Review, No. XXXVII.

* In addition to the works referred to on a former occasion, may be added the treatises of Joannes Nicolaus and Petrus Castellanus in the valuable Thesaurus of Gronovius. tom. vii. It was not supposed that the chastest mind was injured by joining in these Bacchanalian revels. Diog. Laert. lib. ii. § 78. See also Lucian in Amor. v. 5. p. 317. Plato, in one of the gravest of his works, considers drunkenness as not only allowable, but even as a sort of duty on the Dionysian Festivals. De Leg. lib. vi. p. 623. B.

merely as a harmless* caricature ; the comic poet being to them, something like what a Gilray was to us ; with this difference, that the former drew entirely from his own resources, while that ingenious caricaturist often acted upon the suggestions of wiser heads than his own. As these plays were acted only *once*, the reader will tell himself, that it became a necessity that the impression made should be a strong one ; and this necessity will be further enforced to his mind by the reflection, that the audience could only carry away, what they retained in their memories ;—what they lost in the recitation was not likely to be recalled by books ;† for these were few and scarce, and the Athenians

* Wieland has written an essay of considerable length on the subject of the differences between Socrates and Aristophanes. As his view of the subject is entirely different from the one here taken up, his line of argument is, of course, as different ; he fully agrees with the present writer, however, in thinking that no consequences ever resulted from the exhibitions of the comic theatre, and that therefore every reader may, with a safe conscience, relish the wit and farcical humour of the ‘Clouds,’ without making himself uneasy in ascribing malevolent motives to the author of the piece. See his Versuch

über die Frage : ob und wie fern Aristofanes, &c.

† A few terms from the *critical* vocabulary of the times (and it is from single words that we often get so close a view of things) will shew this most forcibly. *Ευσυνεπτον*, *ευμνημονευτον*, *ευπαρολυσθητον*, *ευαπαρευσον*, *αξιοδιατην*, *αξιανυσον*, were words which, from the nature of their dramatic representations, the Greeks had constantly on their lips for the conveyance of their mutual ideas : and an English reader, as Mr. Twining (from whom this note is chiefly derived) remarks, may easily see their power, by observing the feeble length of periphrastic

were, as we have already observed, a seeing and hearing, but not a reading public. For these and a few other remarks the penetration of the reader may be trusted. In this place also, were it necessary, we might enter at some length into the state of parties, which in some shape or other always divided Athens. A war party and a peace party—a party which favoured aristocratical, and a party which in like manner leaned to democratical principles, are terms which we easily understand; and we can guess, by the influence they have upon ourselves, what would be their effects upon the fiery, disputatious, and idle citizens of Athens. To their literary* parties, however, and more particularly to that war of opinion, which existed between

wire-drawing to which a translator is reduced, who would give the full value of them. Thus the single word *εὐκρινεῖν* is rendered, by Twining himself, *Easily comprehended by the eye*, which certainly does not convey the full meaning of the word:—by Dacier, *Que l'œil puisse comprendre et mesurer aisément et tout d'un coup*;—by Batteux, *Qui puisse être saisi d'un même coup d'œil*;—by Marmontel, *Un tout ensemble où la vue ne s'égare point*. The peculiar use of the verb *αἰχρῶ*, applying to vision that sort of pleasure, which in the sense of taste is called liquorish-

ness, and the word *ἀκρίβεια*, as applied to the scholars of the different philosophers, (see Diog. Laert. passim) may also not improperly be noticed here.

* Their extreme violence may be best judged of, by referring to some of the literary contests of Italy. The separate pretensions of Tassoni and Bracciolini to the invention of the comic Epopeia, were almost contested at the sword's point. The Ariostisti and Tassisti form two warm factions even at this day.—*Littérature du Midi*, t. ii.

the philosophers and the writers for the comic stage, we have nothing analogous ; but it was as keen, as bitter, and as unintermitting as any opposition of politics between the Whig and Tory of this country : even the subordinate animosities between the comedian and the flute-player, who was employed to regulate the steps of the choral movements, give occasion to remarks in the plays* of Aristophanes, (who certainly did not want for the esprit de corps,) which to this day are highly amusing. Now though nobody questions the general sincerity of those who advocate Whig or Tory principles among ourselves, yet we believe the warmest arguers on either side would not always like to be taken to the letter in the opinions of each other, which the heat of argument sometimes elicits : strong expressions on one side are and must be met by strong expressions on the other ; opinion must be combated by opinion, and the public are the real gainers by the warmth of the controversy—they form silently their judgment from the conflicting parties, and often set right those who are ostensibly their preceptors. And in free states it is right that all this should be so. The atmosphere which we breathe is purged and cleansed in the same manner : the

* In *Acharnensibus*, 862—9. In *Vespis*, 582. In *Avibus*, 861. See a learned and entertaining article on this subject in the German

Attic Museum, entitled, *Die Erfindung der Flöte und die Bestrafung des Marsyas*.

explosion takes place above, and the quiet fields below are only made sensible of the storm by the showers which are elicited from the concussion, and which fall to gladden, to fatten, and to fertilize. In this sense, Socrates, as a philosopher, was fair game for Aristophanes, as a comedian; and the good sense of the former (perhaps the most predominant feature in his wonderful mind) would lead him to be the first to laugh at the absurdity, and would teach him that in a free state it was better that many things should evaporate in a laugh than in a more serious way. Many other points might here be insisted upon, and particularly such as would tend to remove those prejudices, which lead readers to suppose, that Socrates was, at the time of the exhibition of the *Clouds*, the same important personage to his contemporaries, which his doctrines and his death have since made him to posterity; and that *therefore* any attack upon him *must* have been the effect of envy and malevolence. Independently of the privileged licence of a poet, whose opinions are always considered with a certain degree of indulgence, it would be easy to prove, from the long note attached to the translated parabasis in the **Knights*, that Socrates, an obscure philosopher just commencing his career, could be no great object of envy to Aristophanes, already high in fame, and shining in a branch of that parti-

* See page 202 in this volume.

cular profession* where it was so peculiarly the object of ambition in Athens to excel. The relationships of rank,—those relations which all are so ready to deny as influencing their conduct, but which, in fact, operate so strongly (and with good reason) upon all,—might here also be mentioned with effect; and it would be no difficult matter to shew, that though a mistaken contempt might thus be generated, there would be small grounds for supposing a decided malevolence, in a man of rank and property, to the son of Phænaret the midwife, who valued his house with all its contents at five† minæ. Even the opposition of personal character, as well as of profession, between the philosopher and the poet;—the one gay, jovial, light-hearted, and a man of the world; the other serious, thoughtful, and contemplative; witty perhaps, but from the vivacity which lies in the intellect, and not that more sociable one which lies in the temperament, might not have been undeserving of remark, and still more might we insist upon the circumstance, that the personal‡ appearance of Socrates (which

* The possession of talents for the drama were, according to Plato, the surest road to honour and promotion in Athens, as military endowments were in Sparta.

† Xenophon in *Oeconomicis*.

‡ The enthusiastic admiration, which the character of Socrates has justly excited, has led some

men to question the fact of his deformity, and even to assert the very contrary. Epictetus, among the ancients, originated, I believe, this opinion; and it appears from Brucker, that there have been some modern writers, hardy enough to follow in his steps, in spite of the express testimonies of Plato and

was described more at length than persons of good taste might think warrantable, on purpose to give effect to this remark) was a consideration to a poet, part of whose entertainment consisted in the ridiculousness* of his masks, and who in giving the masks of Prodicus or Hippias, would have given what the greater part of the spectators would neither have knowledge of, nor relish for :—but it is time to hasten to remarks of a more important tendency, and these will be discussed as freely, but as candidly as every other part of the subject.

The name of Socrates is known to most readers only by the page of history, where nothing appears in its undress ; and even in persons tolerably conversant with the learned languages, the knowledge of this singular man is often confined to that beautiful little work of Xenophon, which indeed deserves the classical appellation of “ golden,” and to

Xenophon to the contrary. Epic-
teti vestigiis insistent celeberrimi
viri I. A. Fabricius et C. H. Heu-
mannus, qui de formâ Socratis non
deformi et fedâ quemadmodum
vulgò traditur, docte commentatus
est, putatque ex malè intellecto
Zopyri, insulsi hominis et ab Alci-
biade derisi, iudicio, et ex confuso
Cratete, deformi specie noto, cum
Socrate, fabulam fuisse natam. De
Scholâ Socraticâ. Brucker, v. i.
p. 542.

* 'Επι το γελοιοτερον εσχηματιζεται
is the expression of Julius Pollux
(lib. iv. c. 19.) when speaking of
the comic mask. A ridiculous
face was, according to Aristotle,
a legitimate point of attack in
comedy, and fell precisely under
the Greek definition of the γελοιον.
Το γαρ γελοιον εστιν ἀμαρτημα τι και
αισχος ανωδυνος, και η φθαρτικον ειναι,
ευθυς το γελοιον προσωπον αισχρον τι και
δυσραμμενον απυ οδυνης. In Poet. §
xi. See also Lucian de Salt. v. v.

that immortal Trilogy* of Plato, which has been embalmed by the tears† of all ages. When we read the admirable system of ethics (some few blots excepted) which is laid open in the former, and the simple narrations which conduct the author of them to the close of his mortal career in the latter, it is not simply a burst of admiration, or grief, or horror, which breaks from us, but a union of all three, so profound, and so involved, that the mind must be strong indeed, which can prevent the feelings, for a time, from mastering the judgment. Few readers, it is believed, even make the attempt: the prison-scene is an agony of suffering, to which the mind gives way that it may not be torn by opposing it; Socrates drinking the poison shocks the imagination—we feel, such is the merit of the sufferer, or such

p. 141, and Cicero de Oratore, where he enters into a copious explanation of the sources of the ridiculous.

* The works of Plato are usually divided into tetralogues; and considering their dramatic nature, the idea of thus dividing them is not an unhappy one. In this manner the Euthyphron is generally coupled with the Apologia, the Criton, and the Phædon, but I think, not very fortunately. The Euthyphron has in it the fault, which may be ascribed to so many of the dia-

logues of Plato; it refutes and removes opinions quite sufficient for the good conduct of ordinary life, and substitutes nothing better in their place.

† One of the greatest, wisest, and best men of antiquity, and whose little infirmities only made him the more amiable, confesses that he never read the Phædon without an agony of tears. Quid dicam de Socrate? cujus morti ilachrymare soleo Platonem legens.—*Cic. de Nat. Deor.* lib. viii.

the consummate* skill of his biographer, as if a sin had been committed against human nature—we think for a moment that a chasm has been left in society which can never again be filled up, and we feel as if we could stop nature herself in her course, to protest against a transaction, the guilt of which seems to belong to all ages. It is an invidious task to interrupt the current of such feelings, even if there be any thing illegitimate in their source: fortunately for the honour of our species these feelings are mostly right in their application, and what deductions are made can be supplied from higher sources; we should spurn ourselves if we otherwise attempted to do them away. What these deductions are must now be explained, and the writer of this discourse feels assured, that the minds and the authorities of persons infinitely more learned than himself, will go with him in the explanation.

Two books have been referred to, (forming but a small portion of the *Charta Socratica*, or those writings by which the manners, life and doctrines of Socrates may be made

* The following remark, by a most discerning judge of conduct, deserves insertion here. "The magnanimity of Socrates surely deserves admiration; yet it is not that in which he most outshone other men. The circumstances of Lord Russel's fate were far more

trying. Socrates, we may easily suppose, would have borne Lord Russel's trial; but with Bishop Burnet for his eulogist, instead of Plato and Xenophon, he would not have had his present splendid fame." Mit. Hist. of Greece, v. p. 155.

familiar to us) as including almost all that is known of this extraordinary man by the generality of readers. These books form part of the system of education in most of our great schools : they are read at an age, when the feelings are warm, the impressions vivid and lively, and when the pride of learning is beginning to operate very strongly. This course of study necessarily brings two names into contact, which are often afterwards connected merely for the purpose of making dangerous and unworthy comparisons. Youthful and inquisitive minds see that system of ethics, which they are told, more particularly forms the internal evidence for the divine authority of the Scriptures, in some measure laid open by the hand of Xenophon; they see the immortality of the soul intimated in the dialogues of Plato, and did their researches extend farther into the Socratic philosophy, they might see dark suggestions of many of the other great Scriptural doctrines—the nature of moral* evil, the originally† happy state of man, the‡ deluge, the doctrine of free§ will, and a future|| state of rewards and punishments. The much greater doctrines of Repentance and the Atonement they do not see displayed ;

* In Theæteto, p. 128.

§ De Leg. l. i. p. 573. C. D. l.

† In Politico, p. 175. G. De x. p. 672. C.

Leg. 4. p. 599.

|| De Leg. l. ix. 663. C. D. In

‡ De Leg. l. iii. 585.

Gorgia, pp. 312, 13, 14. De Rep. l. x.

but neither the voices of their own conscience nor a commerce with the world, have taught them the truly divine hand manifested in the former, and the incomplete development of their faculties renders them utterly incapable of duly estimating the latter. We know that we speak from higher authority than our own, when we say that the consequences of these early impressions are often fatal; that men are thus made half-wise in human learning and utterly ignorant in that better wisdom, which makes wise unto salvation. A deeper research into the writings of the Socratic school might lead them to appreciate somewhat better that profound maxim, which does so much honour to the most thoughtful and philosophic people in Europe, that there is no philosophy so deep as the philosophy of Christianity: but time, opportunity, and it may be added, a more competent share of scholarship than sometimes falls to the lot of such persons, are necessary to the task; and the consequence is, that they are left a prey to doubts and disquietudes, from which even the consciousness of an upright and unblemished life does not at all times remove the sting.*

We have for this reason felt less compunction than we

* The excellent Lectures on the comparison between Paganism and Christianity, by the present Dean of Westminster, Dr. Ireland, render it unnecessary to pursue this part of the subject any farther.

should otherwise have done in removing any prop to virtue, however misplaced, by displaying some proofs in the preceding part of these remarks, that the character of Socrates was a little more open to remark, than some admirers in their ignorance are aware of, and more than some in their knowledge, are willing to bring into notice. Learned and impartial men, well acquainted with the subject, will do the present writer the justice to say, that some points are not pressed so closely as they might have been, and that had he not confined himself to the two authors, from whom he has very rarely deviated, his remarks might have been conveyed in a higher tone of censure. His object, however, has been, not to depreciate Socrates, but to do justice to a man, whose motives have been much mistaken, and whose character, in consequence, has been unduly depreciated. In pursuing our remarks upon Xenophon and Plato, the two highest and most genuine authorities to which we can apply for the character of Socrates, a little more may turn up for the justification of Aristophanes.

Dates and periods make no great figure in literary discussions; but they are often of the utmost importance in settling the real truth of things. Our opinions of Socrates are derived entirely from the writings of Xenophon, Plato and Aristophanes; and we believe many readers class all these persons in their minds as immediate contemporaries, and perhaps, from a passage in Plato's Banquet, as living in

habits of society together. This was so far from being the case, that the two great biographers of Socrates were actually children in the nursery, at the time the *Clouds* were brought upon the stage; the future master of the Academy being then but six years old, and Xenophon within a year of the same age. Had these difficulties rested only on the testimony of such a man as Diogenes Laertius, whose sins of forgetfulness (*μνημονικά ἀμαρτήματα*) are almost proverbial, they need not have demanded much investigation; but when we find the mistake originating with a writer in general so accurate as Strabo,* it becomes us to state the grounds of our dissent from them. In the battle of Delium, which took place one year before the representation of the *Clouds*, Socrates is represented by both these writers as saving the life of Xenophon, during the retreat which followed that celebrated engagement. No one acquainted with chronology will hesitate to say, that this is a ridiculous fiction. The first important event in the very eventful life of Xenophon was his joining the expedition of Cyrus, a prince certainly not without errors, but whose character, like that of many of the other Persian princes and nobles, contrasts very favourably with the rude republicans, with whom they were brought so much into contact. This expedition is settled by chronologists as taking place just

* In lib. ix. p. 278.

twenty-one years after the battle of Delium ; and Xenophon, who has left us so matchless an account of that interesting expedition, calls himself at the time a young* man (*νεανισκος*), and gives us to understand that his close pursuit of philosophy, coupled with his early years, excited the mirth of his fellow-soldiers, till circumstances taught them to appreciate the practical effects which often result from such theoretical pursuits. The English historian of Greece, who to the utmost boldness and originality of opinion, unites the greatest patience and minuteness of research, settles the age of Xenophon at the time of his first connexion with Cyrus at six† or seven and twenty. What Socrates therefore really was at the time of the representation of the Clouds, and how far the poet was justified in his attack, neither of the two persons, from whom alone any authentic accounts respecting him have come down to us, could possibly tell : their intercourse with their great master must have commenced long after the period in question, and apparently the whole of Xenophon's work and no doubt many of the dialogues of Plato were written at a time,‡ when for their own personal safety it became them

* Exp. Cyri, l. ii. c. i. § 13. l. iii. c. i. § 25.

† Mitford Hist. v. vi. p. 405. In Mr. Mitford's fifth volume, two or three pages are devoted to the

consideration of Xenophon's age, v. v. p. 325.

‡ The death of Socrates was a signal for Plato and other philosophers to leave Athens. They re-

to communicate rather what they wished to be made known respecting their great leader, than what they could make known. These writers, besides, differ considerably in their accounts of their master: in some points they are almost diametrically opposite to each other, in others they evidently write at each other; and perhaps the same remark may have struck the reader, which has often occurred to the present writer, that as the most excellent of Xenophon's compositions is that which he derives entirely from Socrates, so the most noble and the most perfect work* of Plato is

tired, says Hermodorus, (in Diog. Laert. l. ii. § 106.) to Euclid at Megara, "fearing the cruelty of the tyrants," i. e. the mob of Athens. The accounts of the speedy remorse of the Athenians for the atrocity they had committed, seem to deserve very little credit. Vid. Le Jeune Anach. t. v. 558. Mitford, Hist. of Greece, vi. p. 407.

* His work on Legislation. As exclusive praise is worth but little, it will be proper to except the encomiums on drunkenness, contained in the first book, the community of goods enforced in the fifth book, the subjection of women to public meals and gymnastic exercises, and some absurdities on the subject of marriage, and the evident tendency to Manichæan principles

in the tenth. With these exceptions, this work may perhaps be termed the most noble of all that antiquity has left us. If the *παραδοξα* *Λογῶν* to which Plato so continually refers in it, were nothing more nor less than accounts received, in his travels, from the Egyptian priests, and derived by them, through the two Hermæ, from the Old Testament, the wonder excited by its excellence will soon cease. There is something so sublime in the language, and so nearly prophetic in the application of the following passage, that though not immediately to the present subject, the reader, I think, will not object to its insertion. It is an address to the imaginary persons, for whom the writer is legislating—"Citizens, we will

that into which even the name of Socrates does not enter. Now when an enemy and a friend give something like the same account of a person ; and especially when the favouring party has had previously a warning voice to caution him as to the line he might take in his delineation, a strong presumption arises, that the joint opinion of two such persons comes nearer to the truth, than that of a single individual, however respectable in character, or gifted with talent. Now it may confidently be affirmed that, the single fact of Socrates receiving pay for his instructions excepted, (the great charge of *making the worse appear the better cause*, has been already disposed of,) the mysticism, the garrulity,*

say to them, God, according to an old tradition, (that God, in whose hands are the beginning, the end and the middle of all things,) finishes in a right line, conformably to his nature, even when his motions appear to be circuitous, (*οὐδὲν ἄλλοι κατὰ φύσιν περιπατοῦμεν*). Behind him follows Justice, the punisher of all aberrations from the divine law. He that would be happy, lays hold upon her, and follows, clothed in the garment of humility ; but he that is elated by pride, or finds cause of exaltation in his riches, his honours or his personal beauty ; he that in the union of youth and madness, has his soul fired by insolence, as if he required

neither ruler, nor guide, but was himself competent to guide others ; that person is abandoned by God and left to himself. Thus abandoned, this person joins to him others as wicked as himself, and in the wantonness of his exultation, he overturns and confounds every thing. And to the many and the vulgar for a time he appears to be somebody : but vengeance after a time comes upon him : and subjected to a punishment, which none can blame, the end of that man is, that he consigns to utter destruction, himself, his family and his country." De Leg. l. iv. p. 600. G.

* Lucian, whose imagination

the hair-splitting* niceties of language, the contempt

may be said to have lived in the age of Pericles, and whose shrewd observation nothing ridiculous ever escaped, generally notices this part of the character of Socrates by placing him in company with Palamedes, Nestor, and Ulysses, men proverbial for their loquacity. In *Necyoman*. v. iii. p. 24. In *Ver. Hist.* v. v. p. 276.

* An example taken almost at hazard from a dialogue, where perhaps Kant, and certainly Locke, might have found a great part of their theories ready traced for them, will fully justify this expression. The philosopher is explaining various cases, where a false opinion is impossible; and if Aristophanes had been one of the auditors, it is conceived, that he would have found more than one passage in the dialogue, where it would have puzzled him to draw the line between the philosopher and the sophist. Socrates having just supposed a large sensorium of wax to be in every body's brain, produces a variety of cases of impossible false opinion, by reasoning as follows.

"That which anyone knows, and has a remembrance of in the soul, but which he does not feel; it is

impossible that he should mistake this for something else which he knows, and of which he has also the impress, but not the sensation. Again, that what he knows, is another thing which he does not know, nor has the impress of: or, that what he does not know, is another thing which he also does not know; or that what he does not know, is another thing which he does know, as also that what he feels, is another thing which he also feels; or that what he feels, is some other thing which he does not feel; or that what he does not feel, is some other thing, which he does not feel, or what he does not feel is some other of the things which he does feel, on all these it is impossible to entertain a false opinion. Again, of the things, which a man both knows and feels, having the impress of sensation, that a man should think any one of these some other thing which he feels and knows, having the sign of that also by sensation, is, if possible, still more impossible than those former things. It is equally impossible that what a person knows and feels, and keeps a type of in the memory, should be imagined by him to be some other

for exterior* appearance, the †melancholy temperament, the strong addiction to ‡physical pursuits, the belief in a

thing which he knows; or again that what he knows and feels, and preserves a remembrance of, is another thing which he feels; or that what he neither knows nor feels, is another thing which he does not know; or that what he does not know nor feel, is another thing which he does not feel."—In all these and many more such cases, the philosopher pronounces it to be utterly impossible that a man should think wrong. If the reader have patience to read this passage through, or to cast his eyes over the *Lysis*, the *Cratylus*, the *Philebus*, or the *Parmenides* of Plato, (dialogues in which it is sometimes difficult to separate the burlesque from the serious,) he will, I think, come to the conclusion, that the scenes in the *Clouds*, representing the bolting-tub and the cock and hen pullet, &c. absurd as they may appear to us, were derived from actual conversations of Socrates, twisted perhaps a little from their original purport, and reported by some friend, who in such a gossiping town as Athens, might know what Aristophanes wanted in his hero for the *Clouds*.

* As cleanliness, like many other merits, is a relative one, the *propreté* of Socrates's little house, with his couch and occasional use of slippers are objected to him by *Diogenes*, in some such terms as we should reproach a man with, who had committed a *debauch* (see *Ælian Var. Hist.* l. iv. c. 11.)

† The melancholy temperament of Socrates has been noticed by Aristotle; that Aristophanes considered him as a man eaten up, with what Goethe somewhere calls the "*kribscrabs von imagination*," may be seen from the nickname the poet applies to his house. An explanation of the Socratic *PHRON-TISTERIUM* is given in a note attached to the translation of the *Clouds*.

‡ Had there been no other confirmation of this trait in the Aristophanic Socrates, than the little parenthetical concessions, so cautiously admitted by Xenophon in his *Memorabilia*, (p. 361, 3. 362, 5.) and the remarks on natural causes made by Socrates in his *Banquet* (p. 86.) I should feel that this was quite sufficient for establishing the fact.

supernatural agency, to an extent not precisely recognized by the religion of his country, every single trait of the Aristophanic Socrates may be traced in the Platonic, and in some cases with aggravating circumstances, which, if the poet had been ill disposed towards the philosopher, or had even had any more personal knowledge of him, than what necessarily happened in a town, not of very considerable population, and whose customs and manners brought all persons more into contact, than the habits of modern society do, would certainly not have been suppressed in a picture, supposed to be drawn from wilful perversion and malevolent misrepresentation. What are we to conclude from all this? The fair inference seems to be, that the *Clouds* was not written for the purpose of exposing Socrates, but that Socrates was selected (and for reasons previously mentioned) for the purpose of giving more effect to the *Clouds*, as an ingenious satire directed against the sophists and the pernicious

In Plato's *Phædon*, however, (p. 392, G. H. & c.) the fact is admitted at great length, that Socrates in his younger days *had* been vehemently addicted to physical inquiries; and indeed on comparing the whole of the admissions by his two biographers, it seems no unfair inference to assert, that the intellect of Socrates, like that of Anaxagoras, had, at one time, very nearly sunk

under the intensity of his researches into these dangerous speculations. It is singular, and shows how cautious we ought to be in our judgments formed from the writings of antiquity, that what Socrates in the *Phædon* so unreservedly admits, in the *Apologia* he, with as little reservation, denies. (p. 359. E. F.)

cious system of public education at Athens : so far from its being a wilful misrepresentation, dictated by envy or jealousy, it seems very probable, that the parties were very little known to each other ; that the character of Socrates made much that sort of impression on the poet, which it was designed that the preceding portrait of him should make upon the reader ; and finally it is affirmed, that it is a much more difficult problem to solve, why Aristophanes should be singularly right in his representation of others, and singularly wrong in his representation of Socrates ; than it is to take the plain case, that the poet drew the philosopher, such as he knew him *at the time* to be, (which is not improbable,) or such, as he judged him, from a very imperfect knowledge, to be, which appears to be more than probable. If the reader concur with the present writer, he will go one step farther ; so far from blaming the poet for the course he pursued in consequence of his real or mistaken knowledge, he will think him entitled to the gratitude of posterity for the assumption and the execution of the task. We are all fond of the expression that Socrates brought down philosophy from the clouds (and certainly till his time the clouds had been her principal residence) to live among men. If the poet found him on his journey for that purpose, he was not to know the nature of the philosopher's errand, and the wholesome reproof, that was dealt him on the occasion, (for our virtues and our vices, our

merits and our demerits are often the children of circumstances,) had perhaps the power of directing his mind to better pursuits. We conclude, therefore, with saying, that as we possibly owe to the severity of a Review the poet of our own days, who has left all his contemporaries behind him, and made the proudest of his predecessors, in all ages and countries, tremble for their supremacy; so we owe to the ridicule of the Old Comedy the philosopher, whose name (with certain deductions) no man mentions without feeling himself exalted for a time in the scale of creation.

The idle story of Ælian, that Socrates was put to death in consequence of the representation of the Clouds, (two events between which, it is almost needless to observe, an interval of more than twenty years occurred,) has been refuted with too much spirit by Mr. Cumberland, in the Observer, to require any further notice; the *apparent* support* given to such an opinion by Plato, being easily ac-

* In *Apologiā*, 359. Plato, of course, is not guilty of the same chronological error as Ælian. He merely makes his Socrates observe to the dicasts, that the accusations then advanced against him by Melitus, were the same as those which, in *their younger days*, they had seen brought forward against him by Aristophanes on the stage. Vexation, at the inconvenience occasioned to the Socratic school by

the death of their master,—literary jealousy, proverbially inherent in Plato, and evidently not least directed against Aristophanes,—and perhaps revenge for an attack, much more light and good humoured than the offence warranted, (see the *Ecclesiāzusæ* of Aristophanes, and the note on the fifth book of his Republic,) assisted, no doubt, in provoking this attack upon the comic poet.

counted for. But if this idle notion about the immediate cause of the death of Socrates originated with Ælian, it must also be remembered, that this* amusing but credulous writer, has in the exercise of his vocation,

“Compiler, compiler, compiler,”—

evidently struck upon the true cause of Socrates’s death; viz. his political opinions. “Socrates,” says Ælian, “disliked the Athenian constitution, as he saw that democracy has in it all the evils of† tyranny and absolute monarchy.” With that natural good sense, which lay at the bottom of all the real or pretended inequalities of Socrates, this extraordinary man seems to have determined within himself, that the vocation to which he had devoted himself, (and a more high and lofty one has seldom been conceived,) should not be disturbed by the officious interposition and misguided zeal of such an imperious and ignorant rabble as the mass of the Athenian people were. In his religious

* Rabelais, a man of too much imagination not to be delighted with a gossiping book of legends and prodigies, like Ælian’s *Varia Historia*, and a man of too much sense not to despise the narrator of them, among other rubs gives him the following in his description of the land of Satin: Si croyez

ceux qui disent le contraire, vous en trouverez mal, voire fust ce *Ælian tiercelet de menterie*;—“Ælian, that long-bow man,” as the English translator renders it, “who lies as fast as a dog can trot.” Liv. v. p. 105.

† Var. Hist. lib. iii. c. 17. p. 205.

practices, therefore, he at least made every decent sacrifice to the opinions of his country; and his political opinions, a still more delicate point in the suspicious and irritable town of Athens, he seems to have kept as closely as possible to himself. It was with a view to the latter object, as he himself plainly intimates in his defence,* that he had abstained from the General Assemblies; wishing neither to give offence by declaring his sentiments, nor to compromise his character (a character not less marked by inflexible integrity, than the most determined courage) by withholding them. The same good sense appears to have determined him in refraining from being initiated in the Mysteries, the only part of the Greek† worship, as a writer observes, who brings the most profound erudition to whatever opinion he chuses to advocate, which seems to have possessed any energy, and the ridicule or violation of which alone seems to have been visited with any severe vengeance. But however cautious Socrates might be of touching upon these points in public, the same caution was ill observed perhaps in private; and the writings of Xenophon and Plato (for in this point there is no discrepancy between them) prove that the ridicule of Socrates against the constitution of his country was not pointed merely at its mode of choosing its magis-

* In Apol. 365. A. B.

Language of Ancient Art and

† Inquiry into the Symbolical Mythology.—p. 47.

trates by the fortuitous direction of pebbles* or beans. This discourse would exceed all bounds, if it detailed one half of the bitter invectives against democracy, with which the writings of these two most distinguished scholars of Socrates are filled. Besides more direct attacks, Plato evinces his contempt at all times for the constitutions of his own country, by deriving almost all the regulations of his Utopian† states from the maxims of her bitter enemy, the Lacedæmonians. Even that regard, which a painter and an author, like Plato, might be expected to entertain for a mode of government, proverbially affording the greatest variety of characters, and consequently multiplying his materials of occupation, even this has little influence in mitigating that contempt for democracy, which the master of the Academy every where expresses ;—he adverts indeed to the advantage, (in Rep. lib. viii.) but it is to treat it with derision, and to compare it with that predilection, which leads women and children to select the robes that have most variety of colours in them. Xenophon, living more out of the reach of the tyranny of the Athenian mob, observes still less limits in his expressions of indignation : and whatever of clearsightedness and personal virtue can give effect to the expression of opinions, both will be found

* In Mem. Xen. l. i. c. 2. § 9.

† See his Republic, and his De Legibus, passim.

contributing to give influence to the declarations of this excellent man; the soldier-philosopher-author, as the English historian of Greece, by a bold combination, enthusiastically calls him. He talks bitterly of the numbers of his fellow-countrymen, who, "not worth a drachma, were ready to sell their country, with all in it, that they might have a drachma:" he inveighs with the most emphatic indignation against that imperious "crowd of fullers,* shoemakers, carpenters, braziers, husbandmen and dealers," who composed the general assemblies in Athens, and "whose great object in life," he says, "was to buy cheap, and to sell dear:" he intimates that all the world through, democracy and virtue are ever at variance; and he concludes one of those bitterly contemptuous chapters against the Athenian constitution, which, by their decided variation with the general equability of his style, shew how warmly he felt on the subject, with words, which have been quoted in another part of this volume, and which would not have been uttered with impunity within the walls of Athens:—"That the populace should be partial to a democracy, I can easily excuse; for it is pardonable that every person should try to benefit himself; but if any one, not immediately in the

* In Mem. l. iii. c. 7. § 6.

† De Rep. Athen. cap. ii. § 20. It is proper add, that some doubts have lately been thrown on the authenticity of this book. That it

has suffered very much from the lapse of time, there can be no doubt; but the acutest scholars concur in considering it as a genuine work of Xenophon.

rank of the people, prefer living in a democratical rather than in an *oligarchical government, that man is a villain by anticipation, and acts upon the consciousness, that it is easier for a scoundrel to escape detection in a state where the government is in the hands of many, than it is in a state where the government is in the hands of a few."

What Plato and Xenophon expressed in their writings, Alcibiades and Critias, the two other most conspicuous disciples of Socrates, evinced still more decidedly by their actions. Never had democracy two such clever, active, and insatiable foes; and when we read in the articles of accusation against the son of Sophroniscus, that he corrupted the young men of Athens, we have only to open the writings of Xenophon, and to reflect upon the conduct of Critias and Alcibiades, to know what that charge was meant to convey. So mighty, however, is truth, that even with the awkward fact of great disasters brought upon the commonwealth by two men, the formation of whose characters, or of one at least, was ascribed wholly to Socrates, all the charges against him were easily refuted: a strong murmur indeed of disapprobation attended the annunciation,† that this object of popular resentment acted under the immediate im-

* By an oligarchy, Xenophon most probably meant his favourite government, the Lacedæmonian; which the Athenian writers seem to have called an oligarchy, a monarchy or a democracy, according

as the executive power seemed to them most virtually to reside in the senate (*γερουσία*), the two kings, or the ephori. Arist. in *Politiciis*, l. ii. c. 7.

† In *Mem. Socr. Defens.* p. 387.

pulse and guidance of a particular divinity ; but even this, new as it might be, and countenancing, as it strongly did, the opinions advanced, that the defendant rejected the popular theology, even this was heard rather with a feeling of envy* at his enjoying a greater advantage than his judges, than with a doubt of its truth. What then was wanting to the full acquittal of Socrates? Nothing but that which he disdained to give: a shew of submission to the dicasts who tried him, a little supplication to that crowd of fullers, carpenters and braziers, who composed the courts† of law, as

* In Mem. Soc. Def. p. 387.

† The judicial system of Athens will come more properly under consideration in our author's comedy of the Wasps; but a note or two on the subject will be necessary to give effect to the present argument.

Nearly one-third of the population of Athens were, in part, supported by their attendance upon the courts of law in the quality of dicasts, an office something between the judge and jurymen of modern times. In the constitution of these judicial tribunals, from which there was no appeal, and which were not accountable for their decisions, Aristotle considers the whole power of the Athenian democracy to consist; and from

them he derives that disposition to tyranny which, in conformity with Plato, Xenophon and Aristophanes, he ascribes to his countrymen. In Polit. lib. ii. c. 12. If Socrates was tried in the court of Heliaea, which, in spite of the dogmatical assertion of de Pauw to the contrary, rests upon most respectable authority, six thousand dicasts might have sat in judgment upon him. That there was a very full attendance on the occasion, we have Plato's express testimony. A very large portion of the population of Athens thus becomes involved in the guilt of the murder of Socrates: and if cities suffer for crimes as well as individuals, (an opinion not unknown to the ancients, Isocrates in Orat. de Pace,

they also formed the *ecclesiæ* or legislative assemblies. The accounts of Plato* and Xenophon† are too decisive on this point to admit of any doubt: the charge of impiety, it is clear, would have been abandoned, and the gods left to avenge their own cause, had Thearion the baker, and Simon the currier, and Theophrastus the maker of lyres and the rest of the dicasts stood uncurtailed of their usual allowance of submission,‡ tears, supplication and prostra-

381.) there is nothing ridiculous surely in ascribing the subsequent and still continuing degradation of Greece, to the divine vengeance which marked that unholy deed.

* In Apol. 366. C. H. 368. B.

† In Mem. l. iv. c. 4. § 4.

‡ This trait in the character of the Athenian dicast is painted, with much humour, in the play just referred to; the weakest, according to W. Schlegel, of all the writings of Aristophanes, and which, after the reception of his play of the preceding year, could not be expected to be the strongest. In fact, after the rejection of the *Clouds*, a visible alteration takes place in the Aristophanic comedies: the author, as if hopeless of effecting his better purpose, almost abandons the office of serious instruction, and many of his plays are mere *jeux d'esprit*; giving, cer-

tainly, a high idea of the wit and humour of an Athenian mob, but never commanding that regard, and even respect, which the lower orders of society in our own and other countries so often command. As the character of the common Athenians is not treated with any great lenity in the course of this work, it is but fair that they should have all the benefit of the good humour, with which they allowed their failings to be reprov'd in their own days. This cannot be better done than by two or three extracts from the play just mentioned. The best scene in it is where a father and son consider the merits and demerits of the judicial system of Athens; the father being a tough dicast of the old school, the son an improved gentleman of the later day.

trious. The soul of Socrates—that Socrates, who, with every qualification requisite to carry him to the highest dig-

Father. At your word off I go, and at starting I'll shew,
convincing the stiffest opinion ;
That regalia and throne, sceptre, kingdom and crown
are but dirt to judicial dominion.
First in pleasure and glee, who abound more than we ;
who with luxury nearer are wedded ?
Then for panic and frights, the world through none excites,
what your dicast does, e'en tho' grayheaded.
Soon as ever I creep from my bed and break sleep,
through the courts runs a warning sensation ;
There the mighty—the sly—men of four cubits high,
wait my coming in hot trepidation.
First a hand, soft as wool—entre nous, lately full
from the public exchequer and treasure,
Fast upon me is laid ; and my knees captive made,
supplications pour in without measure.—
“ Father,—neighbour and friend—help and mercy extend—
mayhap when in office and station,
Or when serving the mess, you took care to express
in private a small compensation.”
Knave and hang dog ! my care, from a swing in the air,
sav'd his heels on a former occasion,
Or the rogue, and be curst ! had not known—

Son (*writing on his tablets*). Item first:—
suit . . . petition . . . and warm supplication.

Father. Loaded large thus with prayer, in the court I take chair,
from my brow wrath and choler clean clearing;
As for promises made out of doors of my aid,—
with the four winds of heaven they're veering.
Then a thousand tones drop, all attun'd to one stop,—
mercy—pardon—release—liberation;
Of the whole race of men, like a dicast who then
receives compliment, court, adoration?

nities of state, remained, for the sake of higher employments, nobly poor, disdained the compromise. It was not

His pawns and his pledges one defendant alleges;
 and his poverty's ills all detailing,
 The items are thrown with such skill, that my own
 in the balance to nothing are failing.
 With mythical tales one my fancy regales,
 t'other dips into Æsop and fable;
 While a third slyly throws out his quips and bon-mots,
 my passion and wrath to disable.
 Turn I still a deaf ear? better suitors are near:—
 led by hand and in court quick appearing,
 The accus'd to his aid calls his imps,—boy and maid;—
 I bend gracious and deign them a hearing.
 With bent heads . . . in tones sweet . . . pretty lambkins! they bleat:—
 the father, submissively falling,
 Does me suit, as a god, for he knows, at my nod,
 his accounts pass without overhauling.
 (*mimics*) “If the tones of a lamb sooth your ear, sure I am,
 that this boy's, my lord, will not be hateful;
 If beauty more warms,—sir, this girl hath her charms,
 and sure she would not be ungrateful.”
 Downward straight goes my ire, like the tones of a lyre,
 when the pins and the pegs are unscrewing:—
 (*turning to his Son.*) Speak, explain, what dost say, call you this rule
 and sway,
 when the rich to your stoifs are thus suing?—In *Vespis*, 548.
 The author's opinion on the regulations, which made the dicasteria courts of appeal in the last instance, and exempted the members of them, on all occasions, from the euthynë, it is of more importance to state, than this description of the triumphant chucklings of a dicast over the official terrors of his situation.
Father. Crowded house, warm debate, mark some pris'ner of state:—
 doubts ensue,—hesitation,—adjournment:
 To prevent further stir, Lords and Commons refer
 the case to judicial discernment.

of such persons that he chose to supplicate permission to add a few more years to a life already far enough advanced to make it a matter of choice rather than of repugnance, to lay down the burden: he openly avowed the determination, and he boldly paid the penalty.—But the guilt of his death

Then some pleader stands forth, and that scoundrel, whose worth shew his synonyms, “fawner”—“shield-dropper”—

And their note is the same, “While I live,” both exclaim,
“the Commons have no interloper.”

But the votes most he wins there, his speech who begins,

“Mr. Speaker, I move with submission,

After one single turn, that the courts all adjourn,
nor labour a second decision.”

Even he whose voice stills thunder, hammers and mills,

Cleon, dares not devour, jeer or scoff us,

But with fly-flap in hand, taking humbly his stand,

beats and brushes the vermin clean off us.—In *ibidem*, 590.

Among other instances of ro- situations were subjected, the following may be selected, as most this judicial exemption from the easy to be appreciated by modern account, to which all other official feelings.

Some father is gone, dead, defunct—well anon?

leaves a girl, good;—an heiress, much better;—

The *old put* would confer a bed-fellow on her,

and his Will leaves him drawn to the letter.

Lords of locks, seals, and keys, straight the parchments we seize,

while a codicil neatly appended

Cheats the wary and wise, and the girl's made a prize

to some youngster, who's better befriended.

And the deed boldly done, further mark me, there's none

dare report or inquiry request on't;

While another thus doing, there'd be forthwith ensuing

Board, Commission, Report and the rest on't.—In *ibidem*, 583.

lay not the less on those who caused it; on that populace, with whom democracy, as the *honest Isocrates observes, was only another name for intemperance, as liberty was for lawlessness: with whom equality of laws (*ισονομία*) implied the right of saying what they pleased, and happiness the power of doing what they pleased; on that populace, whose singular constitution gave them some of the advantages,† and all the insolence of wealth, without its responsibility, and which subjected them to the real ills of poverty, without enforcing its peculiar virtues. To that populace,—in whom an English mob might witness much of their own easy credulity, without their unsuspecting honesty; and in whom France might trace her frivolity without her good breeding, and her fair exterior with more than her innate corruption:—to that populace, and not to the legitimate ridicule of a Dionysian festival, must be ascribed the death of Socrates. It was but one crime more thrown into a cup already overflowing with guilt; and they who had but just seen a reverse of fortune pass over without its fulness of expected retribution,—when for remembrance of national guilt and deserved punishment no‡ eye in Athens slept,—these persons probably thought, that it would not add much to the horrors of such another night, when to many a former

* In Orat. Areop. v. i. p. 285.

† Xen. de Rep. Ath. c. 2.

‡ State of Athens, after the

battle of *Ægospotami*, described by Xenophon in his *Hellenica*, lib.

ii. c. 2. § 2. p. 72. Schneider.

bloody tragedy—the deaths of Paches and Miltiades,—the fate of *Hestiaa,—the hard lot of Scione,—the cruel fortunes of Torone, Melos, and Ægina, should be added the murder of an old man, whom a Delphic† oracle pronounced to be the wisest, and two affectionate and devoted pupils declared to be the best and most virtuous of men.

It is felt that these remarks ought now to close, and that any further observations may, perhaps, have the effect of weakening the preceding arguments. But he, who has been lingering over the delightful pages of Xenophon and Plato, willingly deceives himself by supposing, that a few remarks on the personal history of the two great biogra-

* Thucydides, l. i. 114. ii. 27. iv. 57. v. 3. v. 116. The bitter recriminations made by Isocrates, in his speech called the Panegyrica (v. i. 149—152.) upon the Spartan decemviri, form no justification of the atrocities committed by his own countrymen, and only add to the horror and disgust which Grecian history is too often calculated to inspire.

† To the deductions made in this discourse on the subject of Socrates's virtue, must also be added some deductions as to the authenticity of this celebrated oracle. Van Dale, in his celebrated treatise de Oraculis (Dissert. Secunda, p. 195.) considers it

as a sheer imposition. A much stronger argument than either Van Dale or Athenæus has urged, seems to lie in the character of the original promulgator of it; the shatter-brain Chærephon, in whom a sort of crazy devotion to Socrates (vid. Plat. in Apol. 360. C. In Charmide 235. D.) appears to have swallowed up the nearer affections, which ought to have belonged to him. (Xen. Mem. l. ii. c. 3.) Lucian (and the utmost confidence may be placed in the tact of that most shrewd observer) appears, by a little parenthetical expression, (vol. v. p. 138.) to have thought on this subject nearly as the present writer does.

phers of Socrates, the friend of Agesilaus and Cyrus, and the master of the Academy, may yet be allowed him, and that in perusing them, the relations between their great master and the comic poet may be still further elucidated. Early in life, Xenophon had been thrown into those situations, which make a man think and act for himself; which teach him practically how much more important it is, that there should be fixed principles of right and wrong in the minds of men in general, than that there should be a knowledge of letters or a feeling of their elegance in the minds of a few. The writer, who has thrown equal interest into the account of a retreating army, and the description of a scene of *coursing; who has described with the same fidelity a common groom, and a perfect pattern of conjugal fidelity, such a man had seen life under aspects, which taught him to know that there were things of infinitely more importance than the turn of a phrase, the music of a cadence, and the other niceties, which are wanted by a luxurious and opulent metropolis.—He did not write; like his fellow-disciple, for the suppers and the symposiac meetings of Athens—he had no eye, like Plato, to the jokers by profession (*γελωτοποιοι*) whose business it was to despatch books and authors between the courses, and to fill up those intervals, when guests look round to see who is guilty of

* Xenophon de Venatione, c. 6, de Re Equestri, cc. 5, 6. In Cyropædeia.

the last pause in conversation—his Socrates was not to be exhibited, as we believe the real Socrates often exhibited himself, a sort of “*bon enfant*,” a boon companion for the *petits-maitres* of the Ilyssus; who sought to win, by dropping even the decent gravity of a preceptor, and who endeavoured to reclaim by affecting a show of what in his heart he must have loathed and detested. Estranged from his own country, at first by choice, and very soon afterwards by necessity, Xenophon became, almost before the age of manhood, a citizen of the world; and the virtuous feelings, which were necessary in a mind constituted as his was, let loose from the channels of mere patriotism, took into their comprehensive bosom the welfare of the world. Life, which had commenced with him in a manner singularly active and romantically perilous, was very soon exchanged for that quiet solitude, which either finds men good or makes them such. In his delightful retirement at Scillus,* amid those enchanting rural scenes, where a bad man finds himself an anomaly in the beautiful and harmonious works of nature around him, Xenophon had ample

* It is difficult to imagine a more rational or more delightful life, than a few words of Diogenes Laertius describe Xenophon as leading in that “loop-hole of retreat:”
 τὸντιθεν δατελεῖ κλισίαν, καὶ τὰς
 φίλους ἰστέον, καὶ τὰς ἱστορίας συγγράφει.
 lib. ii. seg. 52. Books,—study,—

composition;—the healthy sports of the field, and the enjoyments of social recreation;—nothing seems wanting to the picture, which our imaginations are accustomed to draw of an accomplished heathen philosopher.

leisure to meditate on all that he had seen or heard. The “*digito monstrarier*,” that great stumbling-block of weak heads, and of those who do not know how trifling the applause of the world is to him who appeals only to his own breast for the motives of his actions, could not here apply to Xenophon: to him the present time was as nothing; he lived only to the past and for the future. In such a situation, the lessons of morality received from Socrates would rise up in his mind—how much aided by early intimacy with Cyrus, and by the knowledge thereby acquired of the sentiments of chivalry and honour, inherent in monarchical governments, and how much improved by subsequent connexion with the most virtuous state of Greece, and with Agesilaus, the most distinguished man in that state—his own beautiful writings sufficiently testify. His own high talents, aided by such experience and such connexions, would teach him what to omit, and what to press in a work, not intended merely for the wits and scavants of Athens, but meant to be one of those eternal possessions, those *κτῆματα εἰς αἰ*, which great minds generate and perfect in solitude and retirement. It is the Ethics therefore of Socrates, that are chiefly unfolded in the admirable Memorabilia of Xenophon; and after admitting that many of the higher doctrines of antiquity are but *negatives** of the

* How much this is the case in the great Christian precept of “doing as we would be done by,” and the maxim of antiquity, which approaches nearest to it, has been well shewn in Mitford’s History of

Christian precepts, he must be dead to the moral sense, who does not feel a burst of exultation within him, at seeing

Greece. (vol. v. p. 137.) A deduction equally important must be made from the annunciation which, in language the most eloquent (Plat. in Gorg. pp. 290—4.) tells us that it is better to suffer injustice than to commit it; that he, who commits injustice, increases his misery by escaping, and not by submitting to punishment—and that the real end and proper object of eloquence, is to denounce and convict such as have been criminal, even though ourselves, or our dearest connexions be involved in the guilt. The same person, who delivers these admirable maxims, declares, on the contrary, that we ought to avenge ourselves on our enemies by endeavouring to hinder them from wiping off, by self-accusation, the torments of the conscience. “If our enemy,” says Socrates in the same dialogue, (p. 295. A.) “have committed an injury against any one, we ought to take every precaution, both by word and action, that he may not suffer for his injustice, nor be brought before the dicast. If he do come before the judge, it is our business to plot and scheme, that he may escape, without suffering for his delinquency.

Does his crime consist in the robbery of much gold? it is incumbent on us to try that he be not obliged to refund; on the contrary, we should endeavour that he may retain it, and spend it upon himself and his friends, unjustly and impiously. If he have committed crimes worthy of death, we ought to take care that his life be spared; we should try, if possible, that he may be made to live for ever, immortal in wretchedness; and if this be out of the case, we should see that he be made to live in this state as long as is possible.” It is surely unnecessary to contrast with such maxims the doctrine, which teaches us how to treat even those who curse us. One comparison more might be made; but in such a work as this, it becomes us only to make a distant reference to the counterpart. In reading the Phædon of Plato, it must strike every reader, I think, that the parting scene between Socrates and his children in prison is but barely decent; that the *show* part of the drama is brought forward with a little precipitation, and that a little more tenderness on the part of the philosopher would have added still more effect to the magnanimity

how much even unassisted nature is able to produce. But the intellect, (and, from the extraordinary *mimetic* powers of the narrator, it may be surmised,) the manners of the real Socrates were left to be displayed by a man, to whom, when it is said that Xenophon can bear no comparison in point of genius, an inferiority is ascribed to him, which he shares in common with all mankind; the Stageirite alone excepted, whose *Entelecheia* may perhaps be put on a par with the *Erôs*, or inspiration of the great master of the academy. We leave him who has not yielded to the arguments here brought forward for the justification of Aristophanes, to have his indignation neutralized by the Dialogues of Plato. Let him peruse these and he will see that Socrates might very easily dismiss the Clouds of Aristophanes, as the best-natured of men dismissed the fly, which had buzzed about him and annoyed him:—"Go, little creature, there is room enough in the world for you and for me.")

A grasp and a capacity of mind the most astonishing—a spirit inquisitive and scrutinizing—a subtlety painfully acute—a comprehensiveness which could embrace with equal ease the smallest and most lofty knowledge—a suppleness which; with almost incredible facility, could descend from

with which the fatal cup is taken and drunk. We have no right to expect that the death of Socrates should be *perfect*. The simple verses, which shew the best affections of the soul, triumphing amid

the severest and most intense sufferings of body, arise, in our minds, without the necessity of bringing them more immediately under the reader's eye.

the deepest abstraction to the commonest topics of the world—a temper which, in the heat of disputation, could preserve the most perfect self-possession, and throw into disquisitions, which must have been the result of long study, solitude and profound meditation, all the graces of society and the qualifying embellishments of the most perfect good-breeding;—these are qualities which seem to have been inherent in the mind of Plato, and with these he has accordingly endowed the person whom he in general selected for the organ of conveying their joint sentiments to the world. In this union of opposite qualities, Plato may be said to resemble the Homeric chain of gold: if one end rested on earth, the other had its termination in heaven.

A residence in courts (and the court of the Dionysii seems to have been no ordinary one) adds to his attractions some of those charms so rarely to be found in republican writers: that tone of good society, which sifts without exhausting, and plays upon the surface as if to take breath from having sounded the bottom;—that correctness of observation which, acting rather as the annalist than the spy in society, gives to raillery itself the character of wit, and to scandal a half tone of biography;—that tact, rapid as light and as unerring as instinct, which, charitable as it may be to unassuming and natural manners, seizes instantly upon pretension, and lays it bare with pitiless severity;—that delicate intuition, which in manners, in conversation, and in authorship watches with jealousy that nice point, where

self-commendation beginning, the commendation of others is sure to cease : all this may be seen in Plato, and if less perfectly than in some modern writers, it was only because that sex, in whose society it is best learnt, had not yet been able to throw off the shackles of democratical tyranny, or to attain the accomplishments of a liberal education, without forfeiting what ought to be dearer to them than any accomplishments. At once a geometrician and a poet, the understanding and the fancy find in Plato a purveyor equally bountiful : for the one he supplies solid food, and he captivates the other by the most beautiful fables and tales. To his treasures the east and the south equally contributed : he pours forth the one in all the pomp of oriental richness and profusion, with the lavish hand of youthful extravagance ; and his intercourse with Egypt enables him to cast over his writings the imposing reserve of that mysterious eld, who has surrounded the impotence of her old age with a solemn reverence, by affecting the possession of treasures, of which she mysteriously withholds the key. To Plato the past, the present, and the future seem alike ; he has amassed in himself all the knowledge of the first ; he paints the present to the life, and by some wonderful instinct, he has given dark hints, as if the most important events which were to happen after his time, had not been wholly hidden from his sight. Less scientific in the arrangement of his materials than his great scholar the Stageirite, he has infinitely more variety, more spirit, more beauty ; evincing, at

every step, that it was in his own choice to become the most profound of philosophers, the most pointed of satirists, the greatest of orators, or the most sublime of poets ; or, by a skilful combination of all, to form such a character as the world had never yet seen, nor was ever after to witness. Nor is the language in which his thoughts are conveyed less remarkable than the thoughts themselves. In his more elevated passages, he rises, like his own Prometheus,* to heaven, and brings down from thence the noblest of all thefts—Wisdom with Fire : but, in general, calm, pure, and unaffected, his style flows like a stream which gurgles its own music as it runs ; and his works rise like the great fabric of Grecian literature, of which they are the best model, in calm and noiseless majesty, like the palace of Aladdin rearing itself from an ethereal base, or like that temple equally gorgeous and more real, in which

“ No workman’s steel, no pond’rous axes rung ;
Like some tall palm the noiseless fabric sprung.”

Heber’s Palestine.

That Socrates could have so commanded the spirits of two men so gifted as Xenophon and Plato, that they may be said to have devoted their lives to the delineation of his character and sentiments, is a proof of ascendancy which gives us the most astonishing opinion of his powers. It

* In Prot. p. 198. A.

cannot however be sufficiently regretted that he did not take the task upon himself: the most interesting book, perhaps, that ever could have been written, would have been that which traced gradually and minutely the progress of thought in the mind of Socrates, and through what changes and circumstances he arrived at that system of opinions which, if they sometimes remind us of what unassisted nature must be, more often recal to us, "how glorious a piece of work man is! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in apprehension how like a god!" This, however, has not been done; and Socrates must now be taken as we find him: by thus leaving the task to others, he has perhaps gained something in reputation on the score of intellect, but it can neither be concealed nor denied, that on the side of manners and morals, he has lost much both in purity and dignity.

In offering these remarks, the writer is aware, that he shall come across many prejudices and prepossessions; but they are the result of considerable labour and, he may say, of anxious investigation; in making them he has been conscious of no undue bias on his own mind, and he confidently trusts to the truth and to the utility of them for his apology.

*" Se la voce sarà molesta
Nel primo gusto, vital nutrimento
Lascerà poi quando sarà digesta."*

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THE ÆCHARNIANS.

VOL. I.

B



THE plot of the Acharnians is told in a very few words. Dicæopolis, a citizen of Athens, is irritated at the continuance of the Peloponnesian war, that calamitous event, which furnished Aristophanes with so many topics of complaint, and which ended in the ruin of his native country. Dicæopolis endeavours to persuade his countrymen to make a peace with Lacedæmon: his efforts fail: irritated at their obstinacy, the worthy rustic resolves to make a separate peace for himself and family, and dispatches one Amphi-theus to Sparta for the purpose. We are not to look for probability in these Grecian farces: or, rather, it is in an utter contempt for probability and an entire departure from all the ordinary prosaic occurrences of common life that the principal entertainment of these wild sallies of humour consists. This journey of one or two hundred miles is accordingly accomplished in the course of a few minutes. The

rest of the play consists in a succession of panegyrics upon the blessings which this treaty brings to Dicæopolis; (among which the additions to his culinary enjoyments are not forgotten, in a country where cookery is ranked by one of its poets among the liberal arts;) and a series of satires upon the young statesmen of the day, who were impatient for the continuance of the war, and who, it should seem, had as yet shewn nothing but that spirit of foppery, haughtiness, and vain-glory, which often precedes the developement of powerful and active minds: such were Alcibiades and Lachmachus, upon the latter of whom the dramatist's lash falls very heavily. The *Acharnians* is the first in order of time of the plays of Aristophanes, which have come down to us. It was written in the sixth year of the Peloponnesian war, and ascribes the commencement of that calamitous event to a personal affront received by the mistress of Pericles, the celebrated Aspasia. The policy which Athens pursued on this occasion is too well known to the general reader of history to require any long comment. Persuaded by the eloquence of Pericles, her chief statesman, she shut herself up in her capital, left her fields and their produce to be ravaged by the Spartans, resisted every temptation to risk a battle by land, and trusting only to the superiority of her navy, she kept by that powerful weapon the islands and her foreign connexions in subjection, while she made reprisals for the

injuries her own lands sustained by sailing about and harassing every part of the Peloponnesus. It marks at once the uncommon eloquence and extraordinary force of character which Pericles possessed, that he could dare to recommend such a measure to his fickle and turbulent countrymen; and that he not only persuaded them to adopt it, but, in spite of every obstacle, (and the attacks of the comic writers were not among the least,) could keep them steady to this resolve. A short view of the subject from the English historian of Greece will shew the difficulty of the undertaking and throw much light on the ensuing comedy, and the object its author had in view. "While the Peloponnesian troops were assembling," says * Mr. Mitford, "Pericles was engaged in the arduous office of preparing the minds of the Athenian people for what was to follow; obviating the clamours of faction, the discontent which would arise from the unavoidable calamities of a defensive war, and the jealousies to which his own situation of first minister of the commonwealth would now more than ever expose him. Persuaded by his arguments, the Attic people applied themselves to the ungrateful task of stripping their whole country, and fixing themselves with their families within that space, ample of its kind, which the walls surrounding and connecting Athens

* History of Greece, vol. iii. 8vo. edit. p. 89.

and its ports inclosed. All their furniture they brought with them; and many even the frames of their houses; valuable in a country where the materials for building were wood and marble; the former scarce: the latter, though plentiful, yet in workmanship costly. Their cattle, great and small, and attending slaves, were transported to the neighbouring islands, principally to Eubœa. This measure, however, was not resolved on, even upon conviction of the pressure of necessity, without extreme reluctance; for the Attic people, says a contemporary writer, were beyond all other Greeks attached to their country possessions and a country life. The ravages of the Persian war were now repaired, with large improvements upon the ancient state of things; most of the houses were newly built; some lately completed and elegantly and expensively furnished, so that, according to Isocrates, they were superior to the houses in the city. The temples also in the several borough towns destroyed in the Persian wars had been zealously restored; and the people were warmly attached to those which they esteemed their own inherited religious rites, peculiar to that town which had been the town of their ancestors, before Theseus concentrated their religion, government, and jurisprudence of the country in Athens. Besides the prejudices thus to be violated and imaginary evils to be supported, the real inconveniences, unavoidably attending the measure, were

great. While their improvements were to be demolished, and the revenues from their estates to cease, only a few of the more epulent could obtain houses for the habitation of their families; and but a small portion could be received into those of their friends. The numerous temples of Athens afforded an incommodious shelter to many: all were occupied, excepting those within the citadel, and the magnificent and highly venerated Eleusinium, the fane of the mysterious Ceres, with one or two others, which were firmly locked. Even the superstition which had taught to dread the roof of the temple called the Pelasgic, as under a curse from the deity, yielded to the pressing necessity of the times. Those who, in the actual circumstances, took the lead in public business, had certainly a difficult and hazardous office: it was of urgent necessity for them to be cautious of pressing upon a larger portion of the sovereign multitude in favour of a smaller; and hence, perhaps, the distressed individuals from the country were not objects, as apparently they ought to have been, of the care of government, but were left almost entirely to their own means and their own discretion. When the temples were all occupied, the *turrets of the city walls were resorted to for private residence. But neither building nor space within the city sufficed for the mul-

* See the translation of the Comedy of the Knights.

titude. Many families formed for themselves the best shelter they were able on the vacant ground inclosed within the long walls and about the port of Piræus." The historian then proceeds to trace the progress of the Spartan army under their general Archidamus, till they reach Acharnæ,* the largest and richest borough of Attica, situate within eight miles of Athens. "Archidamus had expected that the Athenian people, strong in numbers, naturally high-spirited and impatient, and prepared for war, as they had never before been, would not have borne without opposition the waste of the Eleusinian and Thriasian lands; but he depended more upon the ruin now hanging over Acharnæ. The people of that borough formed no fewer than three thousand heavy-armed foot; they could not but have great weight in the Athenian assembly: and Archidamus thought it probable that their impatience under the destruction of their property would influence the whole people to require that they should be led out to battle: or otherwise, that when the Acharnians saw their own estates ruined, they would with little zeal engage in the defence of those of others, and thus he might proceed with more security to ravage all the rest of the country. What passed in Athens proved the justness of his judgment. From the time of the

* It is the natives of Acharnæ who form the CHORUS of the ensuing comedy and give the name to the piece.

Persian war, now remembered only by a few of the oldest citizens, Attica, except a small part of the border, had never felt the ravage of an enemy. The Eleusinian and Thriasian plains had been plundered about fourteen years before by the army under Pleistonax; and so much was supported now as matter to be expected. But when the Peloponnesian army encamped within sight of Athens, and the rich Acharnian vale was to be the next object of devastation, the whole city was in an uproar. Some were vehement for marching out to defend their property; others as warmly opposed a measure which would so endanger the Commonwealth; but on all sides there was an outcry against Pericles; who whether as advising the war, or refusing the means of engaging the enemy, was reproached as the principal author of the present evils."

Such were the distresses which the first year's invasion of Attica occasioned; but the feelings which it engendered soon wore off, and the Athenians are represented in this comedy, after suffering the same calamity for five successive years, as anxious only for war, and as spurning at every proposal of the Spartans for accommodation. In the sixth year of the war, the period when this comedy was performed, the Lacedæmonian government, according to Mr. Mitford, alarmed by the success of their opponents, "became anxiously desirous of peace; but they expected only insult from

the haughty temper of their enemy, should they send ministers publicly to propose terms: they made, however, repeated trials by secret negotiation. The wiser and more moderate Athenians, and those of higher rank in general, would gladly have profited from the present prosperity to make an advantageous accommodation. But the arrogance of the people, fed by success, and enflamed by the boisterous eloquence of Cleon, now the popular favourite, (and minister since the death of Pericles,) made all endeavours for the salutary purpose fruitless."

The preceding observations will put the reader in possession of all that is necessary for understanding the politics of the following play, and he is warned at the commencement that it is a play entirely political: if he has any knowledge of "the sovereign multitude" of Athens, he will not be surprised at the lowness of humour with which the poet artfully endeavours to cheat them into good sense. The writers of the OLD COMEDY resemble in some respects the FOOL of the baronial times; for the privilege of telling a few wholesome truths, they were condemned to utter a great deal of nonsense: the writers' talents were thus circumscribed or sacrificed; but pride and self-love (two large ingredients in all democracies) were effectually consulted. Plutarch, a great enemy to Aristophanes, allows that the comedy made such an impression on the poet's audience, that nothing was to

be heard for a long time among the populace but quotations and recitations from it. It may be as well to add, that Acharnæ abounded in coal mines, and that many allusions to the occupations of its inhabitants are made in the course of the play. We have here also the first attack of the poet upon the tragic writer Euripides.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DICÆOPOLIS.

HERALD.

AMPHITHEUS.

AMBASSADORS.

PSEUDARTABAS, *or* THE KING'S EYE.

THEORUS.

CHORUS—*composed of Acharnians.*

WIFE *of* DICÆOPOLIS.

DAUGHTER *of* DICÆOPOLIS.

CEPHISOPHON—*Servant to EURIPIDES.*

EURIPIDES.

LAMACHUS.

MEGARIAN.

DAUGHTERS *of the* MEGARIAN.

SYCOPHANT.

BÆOTIAN.

NICARCHUS.

SERVANT *of* LAMACHUS.

COUNTRYMAN.

PARANYMPH.

MESSENGERS.

SCENE—THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY—*afterwards the*
House of DICÆOPOLIS in the Country.

THE ACHARNIANS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

DICÆOPOLIS* *solus.*

Dic. OUT, out upon it; I am sick, heartsick!
My joys are few, heav'n knows! some three or four:
But for my plagues, they come in whole battalions,
In numbers numberless, like Ocean's waves.—
Yet, I have had my touches too of joy,
Pure, genuine joy—when was't?—stay, stay—'twas when

* Almost all the dramatic names of Aristophanes have a particular signification. Thus *Dicæopolis* means a worthy citizen. The reader must be prepared to encounter in the worthy citizen all that rusticity and “ton de goguenard,” which I must resign at the outset to the utter contempt of those, who cannot find in honest intentions some apology for coarse manners and low buffoonery. It is a picture uniquely Greek, to have a person of his rank in life giving such a debtor and creditor account of his intellectual pleasures as *Dicæopolis* does in this opening soliloquy.

I saw, dropping from *Cleon's full-gorg'd mouth,
 Those same five talents. Oh! the very sight
 Was milk and honey to me, genuine transport!—
 Love we the knights for this, their's was the deed,
 And faith 'twas such an one as Greece might well
 Be proud of. Then again came t'other trouble,
 A trouble that might give the tragic Muse
 Fit theme and matter. I—a simple wight—
 Sat open-mouth'd, hugging myself in hopes
 Of something from the pen of Æschylus.†
 Sudden a hasty summons shakes the roof:
 And—"Hœa, Theognis!‡ please to introduce

* Cleon (of whom much more hereafter) had taken a bribe from the islanders in subjection to Athens, under an agreement that he was to persuade his countrymen to lighten the annual tribute, which was levied upon the subject states. The knights, getting scent of this, prosecuted the corrupt demagogue, and he was condemned to pay the fine of five talents, which is here mentioned.

† Æschylus was not living at the time this comedy was acted: the passage therefore alludes to a curious decree passed in favour of this sublime poet by the flattering gratitude of his countrymen. It

was the common ordinance, that a piece, which had once obtained the prize of victory in the theatrical contests, should not be allowed to be exhibited a second time for the crown. This was altered in favour of Æschylus. An author, who wanted talents for original composition, was allowed to retouch and alter one of the prize-compositions of Æschylus; and the play thus altered was considered a fair object of competition with the original pieces of other authors, and might gain the victory a second time.

‡ Theognis was one of those unfortunate persons, whom civi-

Your company of actors!" brazen-lung'd
 Exclaims the Herald,—'twas a blow that pierc'd
 My very vitals! Then Dexitheus enter'd
 And tried his skill in a Bœotian song,
 In hopes to gain the well-contested heifer: *
 A great refreshment that!—But then again
 This year has been a death-blow to me. Oh
 'Twas dislocation of the neck,—a death
 Of vapours and the spleen—to see and hear
 That fellow Chæris stooping, sirs, and slouching,
 And flourishing his harsh, obstreperous† preludes—

lized society are so little disposed to forgive—a bad poet, and a cold dramatist. There was so little warmth or fire in his compositions, that in Athens, where every one had a nick-name, (see a pleasant fragment of Anaxandrides in Athenæus, lib. vi.) he was called Snow. We shall see Aristophanes making a laughable application of this name very shortly; or rather it is probable that Theognis derived his name from that passage of our acrimonious dramatist.

* A heifer was the prize of victory in the musical contests, as a bull was the prize of competition for the dithyrambic poets. See the Dissertations of Bentley on

Boyle's edition of the Letters of Phalaris, p. 170. a work which excites almost as much astonishment in the department of criticism as the prodigious leaps of Archimedes and Newton do in mathematical science.

† It has not been thought necessary to enter into the *nomi*, or measures of the Greek music. Whoever wishes to be informed on this point may consult the French Anacharsis, where the subject is discussed at great length. The measure referred to in the text is that called the *Orthian*; it furnishes the author with more than one play of words in the course of the following comedies.

But of all pains, past, present, or to come,
 Never since first I took to living cleanly,
 And making my ablutions, felt I, sirs,—
 The dust so painful in my eyes as now.*
 'Tis morn: it is the stated† term, and yet
 The ΠΝΥΧ‡ is quite deserted: not a soul
 Within't! No: my fine idle sparks must stand
 And gossip in the Forum; skipping here
 And there to shun the herald's painted rope.§

* This is one of those pleasantries so common in Aristophanes, which the critics call *παρ' ἄπροσιν*, or jokes by surprise. It might have been expected, from what had gone before, that the worthy citizen was on the point of mentioning some new and still more serious grievance. The English reader must be content to see with a grave face many similar passages pointed out to him as humorous, when the real facetiousness can be felt by those only who have a nice knowledge of the original language, and to whom the various expressions and customs of antiquity are perfectly familiar.

† The assemblies of the people were either stated or extraordinary. The *stated* assemblies met four times in the course of every

thirty-five days. The nature of these assemblies will be more fully explained hereafter.

‡ This word will occur very frequently in a work connected with Athenian politics. The ΠΝΥΧ was a public place, which derived its name from the number of stones with which it was filled. (A curious allusion to this circumstance will be found in the ensuing comedy of the Knights.) The General Assemblies were usually held in the ΠΝΥΧ; and before these assemblies all ambassadors were required to give an account of their missions. The three or four following scenes turn upon this point of Athenian legislature, and are consequently of much interest to the scholar.

§ "If the people," says Arch-

Plague take our chairmen, what are they about,
 That they too come not? Creeping, and snail-paced,
 They never find their way till noon at least.
 What crowding then and elbowing among them!
 What jostling for the foremost seats! heav'n save us!—
 But for a safe and honourable peace,—
 My masters never trouble once their heads
 For that: good citizens! sweet citizens!—
 As I'm an honest man, I blush for you!
 For my part, sirs, sure as the morning comes,
 So sure am I the first at the assembly.
 Solus cum solo there I take my seat;
 And first I groan a little,—then I yawn
 A little,—stretch a little,—hawk a little:—
 Then comes a fit of vapours,—then I fall
 To tracing figures in the sand, or pluck

bishop Potter, “ were remiss in coming to the assemblies, the magistrates used their utmost endeavours to compel them: they shut up all the gates, that only excepted through which they were to pass to the assembly: they took care that all vendibles should be carried out of the market, that there might be nothing to divert them from appearing: and if this was not sufficient, the *Logistæ* (whose business this was) took a cord dyed

with vermillion, with which they detached two of the *Toxotæ*, or public officers, into the market, where one of them standing on one side, and another on that which was opposite, pursued all they found there and marked with the cord as many as they caught, all which had a certain fine set upon them.” The polished Athenians appear continually like a set of thoughtless, volatile, romping school-boys.

An idle hair or so, or puzzle me
 In * sums and items of arithmetic;
 While ever and anon I cast an eye
 Upon the blooming fields, and breathe a prayer
 Of earnestness for peace. As for the town,—
 Fogs and east winds light on't!—I lack of nothing
 But my snug † country-box and pleasant acres.
 No talk from them of buying coals and oil
 And vinegar; *buy! buy!* thank heav'n the word's

* Dicæopolis most probably alludes to the additional expenses, which his *involuntary* residence in the town brought upon him. Before the irruption of the Spartans had driven him into Athens, he had lived upon the produce of his farm, which, as he intimates with much feeling in the succeeding lines, had furnished him with all the necessaries of life, free of expense.

† The Athenians were particularly distinguished by their attachment to a country life. In the plays of Terence and Plautus, which, I need scarcely observe, are derived exclusively from the New Comedy of the Greeks, every old gentleman has his country-house; and the effect produced by those dramas is not a little owing to the means of contrast,

which this circumstance puts into the hands of the writers of them. The repose of advanced life, and the boiling impetuosity of youth,—the son sighing for the pleasures of the town, and the father engaged in the tranquil amusements of his farm, the hard-earned fruits of earlier industry, are pictures which the Greek dramatists delight to present. A town and country servant often add to the effect (in Plautus more particularly) by characters as strongly marked, and supported by dialogue of as much wit and pleasantry, as any which Molière himself has furnished. The Abbé Barthelemi, in his enchanting pictures of Athenian life, has very properly laid the scene of his Attic farm in the rich vale of Acharnæ.

Unknown to them, they yield their produce all
For nothing, they: nor ever stoop to twit me
With that curs'd **by-word buy*. Here then come I—
Hands, feet and lungs prepar'd; and if a word
Our orators let fall, save what pertains
To peace, I'll raise a storm of words, and rain
A very tempest of abuse upon them!

SCENE II.

HERALD, AMPHITHEUS, DICÆOPOLIS, CHAIRMEN,
AMBASSADORS.

The worthy citizen, as he is called *par excellence*, has not long to wait for putting his threat in execution. Scarcely is his curious soliloquy concluded, when the chairmen make their appearance: the scene of confusion, which Dicæopolis had predicted, takes place; every man elbows his neighbour, and all push for the foremost seat. The functionary, whose office it was to see that the members of the assembly were exactly within the limits which had undergone the previous religious ceremonies of lustration and purification, executes his duties by desiring the members to advance yet a little farther; and the next regular formula of

* There is a play of words in the original, for which a substitute has been given.

an Athenian assembly is enunciated by the same holy person, " Whose pleasure is it to address the meeting?" The first person who offers himself to the notice of the legislative body bears the name of Amphitheus. The title imports something more than human origin. The bearer of it is aware of the circumstance, and is very perfect in his genealogy. (The long generic *derivations of Euripides are ridiculed in this account of the birth of Amphitheus.)

Triptolemus, says Fame,
Was wedded and bedded
With Ceres, his consort fair:
Whose chaste and holy fire
Soon made him the sire
Of a little son and heir,
Amphitheus by name.
Amphitheus thus bred
Soon took it in his head
Great Celeus to form, his fair progeny:

* The Scholiast refers with great propriety to the commencement of the Iphigeneia in Tauris as an example. That interesting drama opens with a prologue by the heroine, from which we learn, in the compass of the first five lines,—that Pelops was the son of Tantalus, and Atreus the son of Pelops by the daughter of Cœnomaus; that

the produce of this union were Agamemnon and Menelaus, and that the former of these two heroic persons was the father of the speaker herself. The Chinese drama, which has lately amused the literary world, was observed to commence with a similar instance of communicativeness.

Which Celeus took the trouble
 On Phænaret his double
 Lycinus to beget as Lycinus me.

(*Proudly*) Thus lies the fountain of our blood in heav'n.
 (*Familiarly*) What's better to the purpose, in myself
 You see the only man, whom heav'n has will'd
 To be your deputy and make a truce
 With Lacedæmon for you—one thing I
 Come short, and want in—'tis a little money
 To help the way: ill suits with birth divine
 And godship such confession, I allow ye.
 But rest the blame with your close-fisted chairmen,
 Who have not in more fitting guise provided me.

Chair. What hoa there, beadles,—constables,—I say!

Amp. (alarmed.) Celeus—Triptolemus—I make appeal.
 You will not see such slight upon your kindred!

Dic. Good *chairmen—members of the Prytaneum,
 Ye surely do despise unto the assembly,
 Who rudely force away a man that fain
 Would make a truce for us, and give our arms
 A holiday.

Chair. Good friend, command your speech.

* For an explanation of the word here, and in other places, rendered *chairmen*, see the Note which gives an account of the constitution of the Athenian senate.

Dic. Vengeance upon me, if I do! treat ye
Of aught but peace, this tongue shall keep no measures.

Her. What ho! the *ambassadors from the great king—
The court demands their presence!

Dic. What does he
Deliver us? A plague upon these envoys,
I hate their peacock trains, their six-foot words,
And swell of ostentation.

Her. Peace there, fellow.

Dic. Heavens! what a dress! this comes of †Ecbatane!

SCENE III.

AMBASSADORS, KING'S EYE (or PSEUDARTABAS),
and former Characters.

Amb. We were your worships' representatives
To the great king, and for our journey cost

* The object and design of this comedy lie in the previous speech of Amphitheus; a hard word evidently to many of the auditors: the business of this imaginary assembly is properly made to enforce it. The pressing state of public affairs had obliged the Athenians to solicit assistance in every quarter. They had sent to the Persian

monarch for money, and to the king of Thrace for troops: the missions themselves, and their effects, are described with considerable humour in the following scene.

† Ecbatane was one of the Persian capitals, and a place of great resort, I believe, for articles of fashionable dress.

Your honours just two drachms a day, what time

Euthymenes* was archon.

Dic.

Heave a sigh

For those same †drachms!

Amb.

In sober truth, it was

* Euthymenes had filled this high office twelve years before the representation of this comedy. Aristophanes therefore laughs at his countrymen, as the dupes of a set of men, who prolonged their missions solely for their own pleasure and profit.

† The drachma was about eight pence sterling. In all the Grecian democracies, official situations were miserably underpaid; and the corruption which seems to have been so prevalent among their public men may perhaps be attributed to this capital defect in the very constitution of their government. It appears from a passage in the "*De falsa Legatione*" of Demosthenes, that the orator and his nine associates, when they went on the well-known mission to Philip of Macedon, were allowed but eight pence a day each: and Demosthenes, instead of complaining of the scantiness of the allowance, adds, with an emphasis, that no city but

Athens was so liberal in its allowance. It may be of use to repeat what one of the great masters of political wisdom has observed upon this point: "Ordinary service," says Burke, "must be secured by the motives to ordinary integrity. I do not hesitate to say, that that state, which lays its foundation in rare and heroic virtues, will be sure to have its superstructure in the basest profligacy and corruption. An honourable and fair profit is the best security against avarice and rapacity; as in all things else, a lawful and regulated enjoyment is the best security against debauchery and excess. For as wealth is power, so all power will infallibly draw wealth to itself by some means or other; and when men are left no way of ascertaining their profits but by their means of obtaining them, those means will be increased to infinity."—*Edinburgh Review*, No. XXIV. p. 487.

A piteous toil to wander o'er the plains
Of wide Caÿster;—true—we had our tents,
And bolster'd up ourselves as soft as could be
Within our coaches,—wretches that we were!

Dic. (ironically.) O you far'd hard no doubt—I was
much more

At ease who held me ever at the bulwarks,
Glad of a truss of straw to stretch me on!

Amb. And then at our carousals to be forc'd
To drink our vinous beverage so sweet
From cups of crystal and of gold!

Dic. Body o' me!
These prating coxcombs make our thick-sculld town
Their laughing-stock.

Amb. For these barbarians,
The rogues! allow no manhood but to those
Who shew a vigour at their meals, and drink
A hogshead at a draught.

Dic. Say you? we hold
Thoughts quite diverse, and think such fellows are
The stuff that pimps and profligates are made of.

Amb. Four years elaps'd ere we could reach the palace :
Meantime the monarch (in his train an army)
Physick'd his royal person on the mountains.
Eight months in that abode his highness purg'd him.

Dic. And, with submission, when might cease his labours?

Amb. His highness clos'd his course at full of moon,*
 Then hied him home again.—Next came in order
 The royal entertainments: to our share
 Fell some fine oxen—whole, sirs,—† uncurtail'd—
 Hot from the oven.

Dic. Mould these tricksome tales
 For other ears.—Did ever mortal hear
 Of oxen bak'd within an oven!

Amb. We
 Had birds too, summing thrice the weight of our
 Cleonymus;‡ the name they bear is Mock-bird.

Dic. A truce, a truce with these fine mockeries:
 Rest ye content with those same drachms they cost us.

* This is said to raise a laugh at the expense of the Persian king. It was the practice among the Greek physicians to *commence* a course of medicine, and not to *close* it, at the full moon; as the humours are supposed to be then more abundant. The turn here given to the original and the note upon it are from M. Poinsinet.

† We learn from Herodotus, that it was the fashion with the Persians to have an ox, and even an ass, a horse, or a camel served up whole at their tables on birth-days or festivals. If Antiphanes the comic poet may be believed,

an entire camel was sometimes set before the Great King himself. The Athenians, whose tables were much better regulated, took pride in laughing at these large entertainments of the *barbarians*. See *Anaxandrides'* ridiculous account of the feast given by Cotys, king of Thrace, on his daughter's marriage with Iphicrates. *Athenæus*, lib. iv. p. 131. fol. edit.

‡ We shall see enough of this unfortunate person in the course of the following plays: he is generally attacked by the old dramatists for his want of personal courage.

Amb. And now, so please your worships, we return,
And with us bring the mighty monarch's eye;
Whose name we give unto your ears, and call
Pseudartabas.*

Dic. Is there no crow to pounce
Upon this envoy's eye and make a feast on't?

SCENE IV.

Characters as before.

Her. His highness' Eye † will please to come forthwith
Before the court.

Dic. Heav'ns, man! dost see a navy,
Or look'st to turn a point and reach the dockyard?—
You move so gingerly and with such caution.
'Tis well that eye has prop and leather lining.

* The latter part of this appellation is a real Persian name. The first syllable of it in the Greek language signifies *false*. Aristophanes either wished to point at some Persian satrap, as unworthy the confidence of his countrymen, or, what is more probable, wished to throw a discredit on the whole business, as *got up* for the purpose of deluding the Athenians. It is

scarcely necessary to add, that among the Persian monarch's courtiers and governors some went by the name of the King's Eyes, and others the King's Ears, &c. See Aristotle's Politics.

† The legate, to answer his appellation, makes his appearance in a mask, having a prodigious eye to it.

Amb. Come forth, Pseudartabas, unbuckle thee
Before their worships, and disclose the message
His mighty highness trusted to thy keeping.

Pseu. * *Iartaman exarx' anapissonai*
Satra.

Amb. You comprehend?

Dic. No, by this light,
Not I.

Amb. His majesty, he says, is firm
In his resolve to send you money. Tune (*speaking to the*
Your voice before this honourable court, *Persian*)
And say distinctly, money; now, sir, speak.

Pers. † No money for soft-breech'd Ionians.

Dic. Clear and distinct enough, i'faith: what will
Become of me!

Her. What says the gentleman?

Dic. He says that we are fools, and what is worse,

* M. Poinsinet, the French translator of Aristophanes, says that this is Celto-Scythian, and implies—but it may be as well to give his note entire upon the subject—*C'est-à-dire, une charte est émanée du secrétariat (des bureaux) du satrape de la province d'Issus.* M. Poinsinet refers for this explanation to his "*Origines Uriennes*," a work which I have not seen.

† Pseudartabas speaks broken Greek, and this is the usual translation given of the passage. M. Poinsinet, however, thinks otherwise; and referring to his book abovementioned, he says: *J'y ai fait voir que cette phrase barbare signifie oui, cela même, de l'or, de quoi couvrir un schène; apportez-en du plus clair.*

If we expect one doit from these same scoundrels—
These foreigners I mean.

Amb.

Tut, you mistake:

He tells you, sir, of some whole bushels here
Of gold.

Dic. Bushels!—but you're a knave: go to—
I'll question him myself—observe me, sir, (*to Pseudartabus*)
And answer straight to my interrogations,
Or I may chance to throw a dye* from Sardis
Upon your body,—Will the king send money?
Resolve me, yes or no. (*the Persian nods dissent.*) Our
ministers
Have play'd us false then? (*the Persian nods assent.*) Well,
these men nod Greek,
At least; nay, in my conscience, I believe
They are of Attic breed and our own countrymen.
At any hand that eunuch there is Cleisthenes,†
Sybertius' precious son. O 'tis a quick
And nimble wit, where ought that's foul and monstrous
Is to repay the labour of invention.—
And then to come in such expenditure

* This was of a red colour:
Dicæopolis means to say that he
would beat him till the blood
came.

† Cleisthenes and Straton were

two effeminate men, infamous for
their vices. The name of the for-
mer occurs frequently in these co-
medies.

Of beard, and ape the humours of an eunuch!—
 But who's his comrade? Do my eyes play false,
 Or is it Straton?

Her. Peace! sit quiet, man.

List, sirs, the senate bids his Eyeship welcome;
 And asks his presence to the hall.*

Dic. The hall!

For him! a rope! a halter rather—must not
 Such conduct drive a man to desperation!—
 And I stay loitering—Yes! that hall has doors
 Are never clos'd—no stranger but has access
 And freest entertainment there, so help me!—
 But I will do a deed that shall beget
 Amazement—where's Amphytheus?

Amph. At your elbow.

Dic. Take you these drachmas, eight they number, sign
 And seal a truce with them of Lacedæmon,
 For me, my wife and children. For you, messieurs, (*to the
 people*)

Ambassador as usual, and be gull'd. [*Exit Amphytheus.*]

* The hall here mentioned was the Prytaneum or palace, where the executive government for the time being were entertained at the

public charge. It was usual to ask ambassadors and strangers of eminence to the entertainments.

SCENE V.

HERALD, DICEOPOLIS, THEORUS.

Her. What hoa!

Theorus,* please to come before the court,
 And say what message from Sitalces.†

Theo.

I

Am ready to the call.

Dic.

Heav'n help! here comes

Another coxcomb.

Theo.

Sirs, my lords, our stay

In Thrace had been but short

Dic.

Aye, marry, had it,

If pay ran short.

* Theorus is stigmatised in the Old Comedy as a flatterer and a man guilty of perjury. A few pages of Aristophanes have already brought us into very indifferent company; but fortunately the poet holds a light pencil, and his characters, like the figures in a magic lantern, vanish almost as rapidly as they appear.

† Sitalces was king of Thrace. The irruption of the Lacedæmonians had made it necessary for the Athenians to court the alliance

of every foreign power which could be of service to them in this trying situation. The alliance with Sitalces was the more necessary to guard against Perdiccas, king of Macedon, who favoured the cause of the Peloponnesians, but whose haughty, faithless, and capricious character continually led him to break his engagements. The name of Sitalces' son, who entertained so strong a predilection for the Athenians, was Sadocus.

Theo. But that we found the fields
 One heap of snow: the rivers too were bound
 In ice. For why? our frosty bard, Theognis,*
 Was writing for the prize. This tedious time
 Sitalces and myself gave to our cups.
 The man, in truth, is fond to very madness
 Of us Athenians. Nay, the very walls
 Bear token of his fondness. "Fair Athenians,"
 "Charming Athenians," still meet your eye,
 In well-writ characters,† at every turn.
 The son, whom we have made a denizen,
 Felt coil and mighty stir to take his privilege
 And join our festival of Apaturia.‡

* Horace makes the Alps indebted for their snow to the cold compositions of Furius.

† The practice of writing upon the walls, here ascribed to the Thracians, was very common in Athens. See the comedy of the Wasps. Barthelemi has not neglected to turn this to account in his Anacharsis. "Je rencontrai un jour la jeune Leucippe, dont les attraits naissants, et jusqu'alors ignorés, brillaient à travers un voile que le vent soulevoit par intervalles. Elle revenait du temple de Cérès avec sa mère et quelques esclaves. La jeunesse d'Athènes, qui suivait ses pas, ne

l'aperçut qu'un instant; et le lendemain je lus sur la porte de sa maison, au coin des rues, sur l'écorce, dans les endroits les plus exposés, ces mots tracés par des mains différentes: 'Leucippe est belle; rien n'est si beau que Leucippe.'" Voy. d'Anach. tom. ii. p. 380. Edit. Ster.

‡ The festival of Apaturia lasted three days. On the first day of the festival each tribe had a separate meeting, at which a sumptuous entertainment was provided. The Athenians were excellent cooks, and the young prince in the text, among other privileges, to which his right of citizenship entitled

“ And, father, sure you’ll lend a helping hand
 “ To such a state as this.”—“ A helping hand!
 “ I’ll send them such a host!” replied the sire,
 And as he said he swore it, making due
 Libation at the time. “ I’ll send them such
 “ A force, that whoso sees them shall exclaim,
 ‘ Why here’s a host of locusts* come among us!’ ”

Dic. Fine promises! but not one word I credit—
 Saving the † locusts.

Theo. Firm unto his word,
 The monarch sends his bravest troops, and men
 Of highest mark Thrace has to boast.

Dic. My eyes
 Have visitation of this truth.

Theo. (*addressing himself to the troops.*) Soldiers
 Of Thrace, who took Theorus for your guide,
 The court demands your presence! [*The Thracians enter.*]

him, appears to have set a particular value on the *sausages*, which he should meet with at this feast.

* This satire, directed against the foreign troops who devoured Athens, when called to her assistance, is strong and palpable.

† From a fragment of Hermippus, (the comic poet who brought Aspasia before the tribunals of Athens for impiety,) it is probable that the Spartans had made appli-

cation to Sitalces for assistance as well as their antagonists, and with as little profit as that mentioned in the text. The fragment, among other articles imported into Greece by Bacchus, mentions a cutaneous disorder introduced among the Lacedæmonians from Sitalces, not much differing from that which is still to be found in many parts of Europe. Athen. lib. i. p. 27.

Dic.

Who are these?

What mischief have we here, in the devil's name?

Theo. Your eyes behold a host of Odomantians.*

Dic. I reach you not; these are but eunuchs.

Theo.

Tut!

Give them two drachmas for their pay, and presently

Their †little shields will overspread Bœotia.

Dic. Two drachmas! and for such a rabble too!

Such circumcised scoundrels! O, 'twould break

The hearts of my poor ‡bench-tied countrymen,

Whose nobler services have wrought the town's

* The Odomantes were a people of Thrace near the river Strymon: they were great devourers of garlic, and asked extraordinary pay for their services. The scholiast says they were Jews. When Cleon was sent into Thrace to encounter Brasidas, he endeavoured to procure mercenaries from the prince of the Odomantians.

† The *pelta*, or light buckler, was not at all to the taste of the Greeks. The Spartans more particularly affected to despise it, till the success of Iphicrates with his targeteers taught them to set a different value upon it. It would be endless to remind the reader of every *play of words*, by which the poet's ridicule is conveyed; and

still less perhaps to his taste, to attempt an imitation of them.

‡ The poet alludes to the benches on which the Athenian sailors sat for the purpose of rowing. The construction of the ancient ships of war will be best understood by a description extracted from De Pagés, an intelligent French officer, and inserted in the second volume of Mitford's History of Greece. Aristophanes takes every opportunity of complimenting the Attic sailors; and indeed whoever would make himself master of Grecian politics, more particularly at the period under immediate consideration, cannot bestow too much attention on the Athenian navy, at that time the most powerful in the world.

Deliverance.—Why, what now? hang dogs, varlets—
 These rogues have help'd them to my garlic!* Tell me,
 Were e'er men so disrespectful in their courses,
 As these same Thracians! (*To them*) Knaves! disgorge—
 this moment.

Theo. (to Dicaopolis.) Be cautious, nor adventure on a
 man

With garlic† in his mouth—be more advis'd.

Dic. Good chairmen, help, in the name of justice! what,
 In my own country! from a stranger too!
 To suffer such injustice!—Mark me, sirs,
 I claim my privilege, and do protest
 Against the meeting and its purport. See,
 The day is clouding in! a drop of rain ‡
 Has fall'n upon my cheek.

Her. The men of Thrace

Will instantly retire: th' Assembly is
 Dissolv'd: we meet again the §thirtieth.

* Every member of the Ecclesia or General Assembly, according to M. Poinset, had a certain quantity of garlic allowed him, for the purpose, he supposes, of guarding against the contagion of any epidemic disorder. It is more likely that the garlic formed part of the worthy member's breakfast. Our own senators used formerly to carry provisions with them to the house.

† The Greeks used to feed their fighting cocks with garlic, that they might encounter each other with more fury: hence the allusion.

‡ The Athenian assemblies were immediately adjourned in any unfavourable weather.

§ Brunck translates, *Thracæ abeant, et adsint post tertium diem.* Both modes of translation may be justified from Suidas.

SCENE VI.

AMPHITHEUS, DICÆOPOLIS.

Dic. Wretch that I am
To lose my sallad's best ingredient, thus!—
But see Amphitheus return'd from Sparta.
Health and fair greeting, friend.

Amph. (hurrying forward) I take them not,
Until my race has run me to a stop.
The Acharnians are at my heels, you see;
And I must needs be gone.

Dic. But how is this?

Amph. As I came here full speed, bearing in hand
Some truces—mark!—your seniors of Acharnæ
Got scent of them: stiff crabbed dogs are they;
Chips of the holm-oak, or the sturdy maple;
Fit subjects for a fight at Marathon.
“Rogue! scoundrel!” open'd all at once. “What, knave!
Our vines all lost, and you dare bring us truces!”
Their cloaks anon collect a show'r of stones—
I wait not for the storm, but run full speed;
And ever at my heels I hear their steps
And shouts.

Dic. All's one. But dost in faith bring truces?

Amph. Aye, that I do—three several sorts and samples.
Taste these—these truces are of five years growth.

Dic. Bah! (*making a grimace.*)

Amph. Why, what ails you now?

Dic. I like them not.

There is a smack of pitch and naval armament
About them.

Amph. Try some others; these I call
Of ten years standing.

Dic. Foh! they have a taste
(And strong) of embassies and long delays
Among allies.

Amph. What say you then to these?
By sea or land they'll last you thirty years:
Taste them: nay, taste.

Dic. O, sweet! sweet! sweet! they breathe
Of nectar and ambrosia. Not one word
Of three days* camp-provisioning in these.
Fair speech they hold, "*Do as thou wilt—go where
Thou listest*"—hand and heart and voice I take them.
I quaff, I drink, I make libation of them.
For those Acharnians, may the devil fetch them!
War—mischief—misery, good bye. I'll in
And pay his rural feast to Bacchus.

* Every Athenian soldier was obliged, previously to a campaign, to provide himself with provisions for three days. Repeated allusions are made to this custom in the course of the following plays.

Amph.

And I'll

Unto my heels, to 'scape these rogues that follow.

SCENE VII.

Full CHORUS, in pursuit of Dicaëpolis, address each other.*

Double, double toil and trouble, quicken step and change your plan,

Inquisition or petition must arrest the shameless man ;—

It concerns her pride and honour that our town his motions know ;

Who has back'd him, or has track'd him, forward let him come and shew.

* As this is the first passage in the present work which introduces to the reader that curious part of the ancient drama, the CHORUS, it may be necessary to make a few concise remarks on its formation and nature. The subject has been treated very amply by Schlegel, and the Abbés Barthelemi and Du Bos, to whose works the reader is referred who wishes for more ample information. The following remarks are extracted chiefly from the former.—The theatres of the ancients were, in comparison with the small scale of ours, of a colossal magnitude, partly for the sake of containing the whole of the people, with the concourse of strangers who flocked to the festivals, and partly to correspond with the majesty of the dramas represented in

them, which required to be seen at a respectful distance. The seats of the spectators consisted of steps, which rose backwards round the semi-circle of the orchestra, (called by us the pit,) so that they could all see with equal convenience. The effect of distance was remedied by an artificial heightening of the subject represented to the eye and ear, produced by means of masks, and contrivances for increasing the loudness of the voice, and the size of the figures. The lowest step of the amphitheatre was still raised considerably above the orchestra, and the stage was placed opposite to it, at an equal degree of elevation. The sunk semi-circle of the orchestra contained no spectators, and was appropriated to the CHORUS. The CHORUS was composed

Semi-Chorus. Toil and search are in vain,
 He is gone—fled amain.
 Now shame to my age,
 And to life's parting stage.
 Other tale it had been,
 When my years were yet green,
 And my youth in her pride
 Follow'd fast at the side

of men, women, citizens, soldiers, slaves, priests, &c. according to the nature of the piece. The number of persons composing it was limited in tragedy to fifteen, in comedy to twenty-four. The entrances of the CHORUS were beneath in the orchestra, in which it generally remained, and in which it also performed its solemn dance, going backwards and forwards during the choral songs. In the front of the orchestra, opposite to the middle of the scene, there was an elevation with steps, resembling an altar, as high as the stage, which was called *Thymele*. This was the station of the CHORUS when it did not sing, but merely took an interest in the action. The leader of the CHORUS (called the *coryphæus*) then took his station on the top of the *thymele* to see what was passing on the stage, and to communicate with the characters.

Though the *Choral Song*, therefore, was common to the whole CHORUS, yet, when it entered into the dialogue, one person spoke for the rest. Occasionally, as in the present instance, the CHORUS divided into two parts, each having its respective leader, and discoursed upon the incidents arising from the development of the piece. These conversations are generally terminated by their uniting into one body, and resuming their function as a full CHORUS. The *thymele*, as Mr. Schlegel observes, was situated in the very centre of the building; all the measurements were calculated from it, and the semi-circle of the theatre was described round that point. It was therefore an excellent contrivance to place the CHORUS, who were the ideal representatives of the spectators, in the very situation where all the radii concentrated.

Of *Phayllus the racer!
 A fleet-going pacer,
 Tho' coals a full sack
 Press'd hard at my back.
 Then had not this maker
 Of peace, and a breaker
 With his best friends, I ween,
 Long space put between
 His country's undoer
 And me his pursuer,
 Nor should we thus part
 For a leap and a start.

But now my leg with age is heavy, and in vengeance for my sins,
 *Lacratides and all his frost sure winter in these stiffen'd shins.
 So the rogue both scapes and flouts me—

Semi-Chorus.

Forward, forward, friend, 'twere shame,
 Should we, tho' slow, the search forego, and the varlet vict'ry claim.

Who, lost to all grace,
 And the worst of his race,
 (Sky, wet him and soak him,
 Air, strangle and choak him!)
 Hath his love-cup let flow
 With his country's worst foe.

* Phayllus, a famous runner and prizeman at the Olympic games. An epigram, cited by the scholiast, says that he once leaped fifty feet. This could not possibly have been on level ground.

† Lacratides was a former archon of Athens, during whose magistracy there happened a prodigious fall of snow.

Ah, ne'er shall there be
 Betwixt *that* foe and me }
 Love and fair amity ;
 But hatred more glowing,
 And war ever growing.
 At his cheek and his lip,
 And his side and his hip,
 I'll point me and push
 And I'll stick like a rush,*
 Face-twisting, jaw-rending,
 Lip—chin—and knee blending;
 That my fields never more
 May their lost crops deplore,
 Nor my vines mourning feel
 Trampling foot and sharp heel.

Full CHORUS.

Soft and fairly, word and parley we must drop and straight begone,
 To †Ballene visage mean we, comrades mine, to set anon.
 Earth and ocean must be compass'd, till the graceless varlet's found;
 O what storm of stone and missiles then shall fly the wretch around!

* The nearest term in our language has been here given for that sharp pointed plant, known among the ancients by the name of *schenus*. The forcible epithet in the original, which identifies this instrument of vengeance with the Athenian navy, however significant in the Greek, would have lost

much of its energy in a translation.

† A pun derived from Pallene, (one of the Attic boroughs,) and from a Greek word which signifies to cast stones. If Aristophanes had been an Englishman, his passion for puns would have led him on the present occasion to make some use of Stonehenge.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

THE unities of time and place, which were so strictly regarded by the Greek tragedians, do not appear to have stood much in the way of their comic writers; and accordingly Dicaëpolis, whom the first act displayed as forming a component part of the General Assembly in Athens, comes before us in the second as if restored to his beloved borough of Acharnæ, about eight miles distant from the capital. The worthy citizen is commencing his rural sacrifice to Bacchus. His wife and daughter assist in the ceremonial parts of this solemn rite;* the latter bearing the golden basket, filled with all sorts of fruits, in which consisted the most mysterious part of the solemnity. The ladle, with which the proper leguminous herbs were poured upon the sacred cake called *elateer*, is also consigned to her hands, and she is further encouraged by her mother to conduct herself “like a †lady as she was,” and “to keep a steady

* Some account of the Dionysia, or festivals of Bacchus, has been given in the matter prefixed to these plays.

† *Bella belle*, a literal translation of the text, occurs very frequently in the plays of Plautus.

countenance, like one who was fed upon savory." A blessing is then pronounced upon her husband, under certain restrictions; and it does not say much for Athenian morality that the young lady is further instructed to take care that no one in the crowd made free with the ornaments of gold, in which her person was plentifully arrayed. The father next arranges the order of the sacred procession: first is to advance the daughter, bearing in her hand the holy basket: behind her follows Xanthias the slave, raising on high that mysterious *emblem of the active principle, which makes so conspicuous a figure in all †oriental worship. The

* The phallic ceremony of the Egyptians, as described by the father of history, is still more indecorous than that of the Athenians. Some great mystery, it appears, was included in the more revolting part of it; but Herodotus forbears to enter into particulars. It is one of the peculiarities indeed of that most delightful writer to throw out a mystery to his readers without attempting a solution of it.

† See Maurice's *Indian Antiquities*. Among the strange movements of the human mind may certainly be reckoned that propensity which is found in most nations for introducing the grossest images even into the sacred rites of religion. The Greek and Roman ce-

remonies were full of them. According to one learned writer, (Dr. Clarke, on the Greek marbles,) the ancient divinities were but modifications of the active and passive principle of creation. The Christian church has not been without these grosser pollutions. Every traveller knows the figure which stood in the holy church of St. Peter's and the title which was ascribed to it. When the Spaniards performed their *Autos Sacramentales*, those religious pieces were always preceded by a *loa*, or prologue, and concluded by a *saynete*, where comic burlesque and the most licentious pleasantries were unsparingly mixed together. No ceremonies were more unbe-

mother appears to be consigned to the house-top, as a mere spectatress of the imposing pomp, while the sire himself

coming and disgraceful than those known formerly in our own and other Christian churches by the names of the Feast of the Ass and the Feast of Fools. In the former was a solemn procession, of which the central figure was a wooden ass, with a man inclosed in it. On this ass was mounted Balaam, equipped with an immense pair of spurs, and with other costume equally farcical. It then made part of the ceremony for the angel to appear; the ass was next beaten unmercifully, and saved himself from further chastisement only by the dignity and good sense of his remonstrances. The miraculous brute was then led in triumph, in commemoration of the signal victory he had obtained over the unholy prophet. On this occasion the whole band of the ancient patriarchs attended, and six Jews and as many Gentiles, among whom was the poet Virgil, made part of the train. As the procession moved on, these personages chanted certain prayers and conversed in character on the birth and kingdom of Christ. At length they arrived at the church where mass was performed, and at the

end of each paragraph or stanza the audience, by way of anthem, sang out a melodious braying, in imitation of the animal's voice, whose achievements they celebrated. The ceremony of the Feast of Fools, which took place annually, commenced by the election of a pontiff, or prelate, of fools. This dignitary was suitably attended by a conclave or chapter of his own order. Ecclesiastics and laymen, rich and poor, joined promiscuously in the procession. Those who formed it were attired in the most ridiculous manner: some masked, some with their faces painted, so as to produce a hideous effect, and others accoutred like women and indulging themselves in a variety of wanton gestures. Thus prepared, they proceeded to the cathedral, or principal church, of which they took possession; while the bishop of fools, habited in the ecclesiastical garments, pronounced mass and gave his benediction to the audience. The service was interrupted from time to time by the singing of lascivious songs; and some of the assistants played at dice upon the altar, while others cele-

brings up the rear, chanting the usual hymn to Phales.* Some of the epithets applied to this sub-deity are not of the most attractive or honourable kind; but it was six years since Dicæopolis had had an opportunity of paying his respects to him, and he seems determined to prove that none of the god's qualifications had escaped recollection in the interval.

Phales, warmer love than thine
 Never touch'd the god of wine:—
 In their revels and their joys
 Thou art with the drinking boys;
 Not a laugh nor shout sonorous,
 But thy voice is heard in chorus;
 And when skulking Night hath set
 Luxury upon his feet,
 Thou art with him—to intrude—
 Where your lusts may best find food.†—

brated the holy communion. Whoever wishes to see further on this subject (for more follows) may consult Godwin's *Life of Chaucer*. I have nearly followed that compiler's words in the above account.

* C'est un des noms honorifiques et mystiques de Priape. Andréas Divus a très mal-à-propos pris ce Phalés pour un des surnoms de Bacchus. Phalés est une expression mystique orientale, qui

signifie, source de flammes, torrent de feu, &c. *Poinsinet*.

† The effect of the Dionysia upon public morals may easily be seen in the New Comedy of the Greeks. The *dénouement* of a very great portion of their dramas appears to have turned upon the illegitimate births to which the licentiousness of those disorderly festivals gave occasion.

Phales, summers six are wasted,
Since thy converse last I tasted,
And that interval between
Much I've suffered, much I've seen,—
Fight and skirmish, battle-cry,
Toil and tug and Lamachi.—
But I'm now within thy arms;
And amid my villa's charms
All is pardon'd, all forgot.
Mine be now the sweeter lot
In a forest or a glade
To surprize some neighbour's maid
Occupied in petty theft—
Branch that's lopp'd, or stem that's cleft,—
Then to seize the sweet intruder,
And with kiss, and nothing ruder,
To compress her till her soul
Through her lips comes warm and whole;
As the grape gives, under pressure,
Stone and juice and pulpy treasure.—
Phales, Phales, I am thine,
Phales, Phales, thou art mine,—
Boon companion, see my cup,
Let a joint draught drink it up.
If too deep our thirst we slake,
And our morning temples ache,

Peace shall medicine us both
 With a dish of fragrant broth;*
 And if frost be in the gruel,
 What serve shields unless for fuel?

At this point, the CHORUS, who had kept an eye upon him during the whole sacrifice, and knew him to be the person they were in search of, come up: their earnestness is well evinced by the exultation they display at finding him, and their reiterated exhortations to each other to stone him resemble the pleonastic vengeance of King Lear, when he was to shoe his horse with felt "and kill, and kill, and kill, and kill." Could a single death indeed suffice for the punishment of a man who had been so shamelessly impudent as to betray his country—make a separate treaty of peace

* The Greeks were too much addicted to conviviality not to have been sufferers by the pains and penalties attached to it. A receipt therefore for the *crapula*, or head-ache, arising from intemperance, appears to have been in great request among them. The remedy generally prescribed was the herb *εσφαρις*. Theophrastus tells us, that the vine, even in its natural state, had a repugnance to the smell of this plant. Nicochares, the comic writer, prescribes a bath; Amphis, a sudden affliction. In the magnificent entertainment

given by Caranus, the Macedonian, at his wedding, (see Athenæus, lib. 4.) the guests are cured by the exhibition of splendid dishes. Alexander the Great's receipt, after an extraordinary debauch, was to lie in bed two whole days and nights. It may seem impertinent perhaps to refer the reader to a much more effectual remedy in Sir William Temple's *Miscellanies* (vol. i. p. 145.): but the very elegance of the language, independently of higher motives, might tempt the least abstemious to the practice of it.

with her enemies, and who, after such unparalleled enormity, had yet the audacity to look the Chorus in the face? Such are the sentiments and such the reasonings of this body of Acharnians. In vain does the worthy citizen beg them to hearken to reason: the Chorus will hear no reason: we hate you, say they, in a climax of indignation, worse than Cleon; — that Cleon, whom, for the sake of our Knight's feet, we intend some day or other to cut into shoe-leather. The Spartans they proceed to treat with the utmost contempt, as men who had no regard for religion, no respect for the dictates of honor, no reverence for the sanctity of an oath. (The public character of this singular people was indeed ever at variance with their private one, and whoever thinks them hardly dealt with by the dramatist may turn to the much severer account of them, which is given by the friend* and disciple of the great Socrates.) Dictæopolis, without controverting this point, asserts that the Spartans were not the only causes of the calamities which Athens had suffered. He could not have

* See Plato's Republic, lib. viii. The great historian of the Peloponnesian war is not less severe upon the Lacædemonians than Plato. "The Spartans," says Thucydides, "gave ample proofs of honour and virtue among one another, and in all domestic relations; but with respect to the rest of the world,

their rule of acting was to consider as honourable whatever was pleasing to them; and as just, whatever was conducive to their interest." *Thucydides*, lib. v. p. 406. Steph. Edit. In the *Andromache* of Euripides, their character is treated with still more bitterness. *Andr.* v. 444.

uttered a more daring assertion: it goes at once to the heart of the CHORUS; it is "goads, thorns, nettles, and tails of wasps" to them. They are for proceeding immediately to extremities, and prepare "to tear him in pieces like wool that was to form a robe with the vermillion dye upon it." Dicaeopolis sees "that a half-burnt fire-brand is working within them," and endeavours by a more submissive language to allay the rising storm. The CHORUS it will be seen were not men to be appeased by words.

Dic. Explanation—supplication—

CHOR. Both are preaching to the wind.

Dic. Warm petition and submission—

CHOR. Seas are deaf and rocks are blind.

Dic. Bended knees and hands uplifted—

CHOR. We have eyes and cannot see.

Dic. Falling tear and prayer submissive—

CHOR. We have ears, but not for thee.

Dic. Hear, O hear me!

CHOR. I'll not hear thee—death must guerdon deeds so bold.

Dic. (enraged.) Blow for blow then let us bandy, damn'd be he that first cries hold.

On a wight your vengeance falls not—unprovided—unprepar'd—

With the nearest and the dearest of your friends must it be shar'd.

CHOR. (*to his companions.*) Sons and wardsmen of Acharnæ, whence this threat of retribution?

Speak—explain—my wilder'd brain seeks in vain for a solution.

Hath he bairn of any present, hath he prisoner hous'd within?

Whence hath he such boldness gather'd?

Dic. (exhibiting something in his hand.) Now let Fate her work begin:

We have here that in the drama shall enact a foremost part—

Surest test to prove who best loves his craft and trade at heart.

CHOR. All is over—darkness cover me and mine within the grave!

(*To Dic.*) O let prayer and humble tear this my toy, my darling save!

Explanation—supplication—

Dic. Both are preaching to the wind.

CHOR. Warm petition and submission—

Dic. Seas are deaf and rocks are blind.

We are not dealing with a Congreve or a Molière: the modern reader will therefore hear with less mirth perhaps than surprise, that the object which awakens these tender feelings in the CHORUS proves to be a *cophinus*, or wicker coal-basket,* the emblem of their trade and of that article

* This wicker basket is a parody on a scene (well known to the audience of Aristophanes) from the Telephus of Euripides. Euripides wrote two tragedies of that name. In the second of them Telephus is represented as having been wounded before Troy by Achilles. The oracle declares that his cure must come from the same hand which administered the blow. In vain, however, are all applications to

Achilles: that ferocious combatant declares he is a warrior and not a physician. Telephus then betakes himself, with humble supplications, to Clytemnestra; and that princess, touched with compassion, advises him to take her son, then an infant in the cradle, and pretend to kill him before the face of that warrior, if he still remain inexorable. Achilles, alarmed for the hope of the throne of Argos; who

which formed the principal produce of the Acharnian borough. This threat brings the CHORUS to terms; they cannot bear that so close a friend to their craft should be abused; and they will make any sacrifice for the preservation of their beloved *cophinus*: they will hear what the worthy citizen has to deliver, even respecting the Lacedæmonians; and the stones, the intended instruments of vengeance, shall be abandoned without any reserve;—it shall be done, while they transport themselves in a *dance to the

was soon to be his own brother-in-law, and softened by the prayers of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, yields to the intreaties of Telephus and accomplishes his cure.—*Poinset.*

* It is much to be regretted that neither the treatise of Sophocles nor that of Aristocles on the subject of the CHORUS has been transmitted to us. The evolutions of that characteristic part of the ancient drama are now a subject full of obscurity. It appears that authors frequently composed the dance to their own dramas; and that they were as responsible for an ungraceful step as an ill-turned verse. *Æschylus* possessed great celebrity in this branch of his art; and *Athenæus* particularly mentions an affecting scene, in which *Priam* throws himself at the feet of *Achilles*, and where the imposing

attitudes and silent gestures of the CHORUS agitated the breasts of the spectators with the warmest feelings of hope, grief and terror. The general name for the tragic dance was *Emmeleia*, a name implying accordance and a modulated harmony in the play of the characters; that of comedy was *Cordax*, being most probably in the same relation of parody to the *Emmeleia*, as the comedy itself of the Greeks was to their tragedy: the general name of the dance appropriated to the compositions called *Satyræ*, was *Sicynnis*. Statues, it seems, once existed, from which ideas of the attitudes of the ancient dancers might have been collected; for every movement of the human body was observed to collect those gestures, which might afford a concert for the eye, modulated upon that which

other side of the orchestra. Dicæopolis, after remarking in the coarse manner of the Old Comedy on the effects which terror had produced on the coal-basket, and after commenting on that temper 'sour as wild grapes,' which led his antagonists to use their hands and their lungs, rather than their ears and their reason, makes, in his turn, a voluntary proposal: a block is to be brought forward, and if he cannot justify himself for having entered into this separate treaty of peace with the enemies of his country, his head is to pay the forfeit of his indiscretion. Such is the homeliness of humour with which the countrymen of Pericles and Plato were to be cheated into their proper interests. If an anecdote recorded by Aristotle* be true, it was not

was at the same time presented to the ear. Among the graver and less active dances peculiar to the ancients, are mentioned the Dactylic dance, the Iambic, the Nibatismus, the Calabrimus, the Telesias, &c. Some dances appear to have represented different shades of madness; such were the Cernophoros, the Mongas and the Thermaustris: others were of a joyous nature; such was the dance Anthema, where the performers called out for roses, and violets, and the beautiful parsley. Others were designed to excite laughter; as the Igdis, the Mac-trismus, the Apocinus, the Sobas,

&c. &c. Some represented different shapes, as the Noctua, the Leo, the Farinarum effusio, &c. &c. &c. Many of the most remarkable Greek tales were handed down in dances, (a curious example will occur in the *Plutus* of Aristophanes,) and each of the tribes at Athens, says the ingenious writer of the *Essay on the Modern Greeks*, appears to have celebrated in a peculiar dance, some historical event, with which it was connected. *Ath. lib. xiv. c. 27. edit. Schw. Douglas on the Modern Greeks, p. 125.*

* That writer informs us, that during one period of the Pelopon-

without reason that Aristophanes provided these fences for his worthy citizen, who dared to recommend so obnoxious a measure as a peace with Sparta: it is now time to attend to the dialogue.

Dic. Sirs, I request the lending of your ears
 Awhile;—here is the block, and here behold
 The advocate:—not one of mighty port,
 Or stately presence:—’tis no matter; look not
 That I should buckle me in armour, sirs,
 Or guard me with a shield. Sparta shall find
 An honest chronicler, tho’ Fear may try
 The prize with Truth—yes, I have fears, and those
 In no small brood—I know the country folk,
 Their temper’s edge and humour: does some tongue
 Link cunning commendation with their own
 And city’s name? their joy o’erflows the measure;
 It matters not the praise be wrong, nor that
 Their freedom pays the tickling of their ears.

nesian war, a person, who had ingratiated himself with the populace by his largesses, actually appeared in the General Assembly with a hatchet in his hand and threatened instant vengeance on the first person who should dare to give his voice for peace. When Aristophanes stoops, it is generally for the purpose of securing victory; if

he makes so much and such ridiculous preparation before Dicaopolis commences his defence, it is that he may not irritate the feelings of a haughty people, who spurned at serious advice, and who openly avowed that they knew no law of nations but force.—*Thucyd.* lib. 5. cap. 89.

Then too our elder folk,—their whole soul lodged
 In the *justice-box, and ne'er so pleased at heart,
 As when they give some criminal a gripe:—
 Believe me, friends, I am not so unschool'd
 As yet to need the learning of their natures—
 My last year's †play is fresh in memory's tablet,
 And what the wrongs it drew on me from Cleon.
 I was denounced and drawn before the senate,—
 Crimes that I knew not of imputed to me.
 The man was as it were all tongue,—floods, cataracts

* There will be abundant occasion in the course of this work to observe upon that part of the Athenian policy, which made the country a nation of judges, or, to use the original term, a nation of *dicasts*.

† Dicaëpolis here assumes the character of Aristophanes. The comedy to which he alludes was, as we learn from the scholiast, intitled "The Babylonians." It was performed at that festival of the Dionysia, which drew the islanders and strangers from all parts of Greece to pay their annual tribute and to partake of the gaieties and scenical representations of Athens. Cleon took offence at some sarcastic observations, which had been levelled by

Aristophanes at the magistracy and people in office, and brought an action against him. He took occasion, at the same time, to dispute our author's legitimacy of citizenship. Aristophanes, by way of answer to the charge, parodied a verse from Homer; which a French wit has very happily translated—

Je suis fils de Philippe, à ce que dit
 ma mère;

Pour moi, je n'en sais rien; qui sait
 quel est son père?

A bon mot was sure to succeed in Athens, and the poet was presently acquitted. It cost Cicero a long and beautiful speech to effect the same for his poetical friend Archias among the graver Romans.

Were in his voice—a deluge roll'd across me
 And I had well nigh drown'd in the wild current.
 Foh! 'twas a dirty bus'ness! fits it then,
 Ere I begin this parley, that I robe me
 Like one who long has lost the smiles of fortune.

CHORUS.

Why this toil and this trouble,
 Why turn, shift, and double?
 Nay, if things must be thus,
 Go from me with a buss,
 And with *Jerom discuss;
 Perchance that deceiver
 May lend thee a beaver,
 Black as night—dark as furies,
 And fierce as ten juries;—
 Donning this, thou mayst splice
 Crafty trick, and device,
 Such as might, at first heat,
 Cunning Sisyphus beat:
 For, not to deceive thee,
 Thou'rt buckl'd, believe thee,
 To an enterprise greatly
 Important and stately.

* Hieronymus, according to Suidas, was a tragic poet of some imagination, but irregular, and without judgment. Aristophanes

compounds a word after his peculiar manner to laugh at the formidable masks, which Hieronymus used in his tragedies.

From the first to the last
 It will hold thee quite fast
 To the proof and the point:—
 Straining each limb and joint.

Dic. 'Tis time I summon all my courage then,
 And hie me to Euripides. What ho!
 Who keeps the gate? (*knocks.*)

SCENE III.

DICÆOPOLIS, CHORUS, CEPHISOPHON, *servant to*
 EURIPIDES.

Ceph. Who may this be, I marvel!

Dic. Your master, lad, is he within? I mean
 Euripides.

Ceph. He is and he is not:*

* This appears to be a parody on a line of that most beautiful tragedy of Euripides, from which Rousseau borrowed the death-scene of his Julie, and perhaps unconsciously some part of his own. It may be presumed that the great novelist's wife was also a reader of the *Alcestis*, as she gives precisely the same answer to Goldoni, when he visits her master, that Cephisophon gives

to Dicæopolis. Je monte au quatrième étage à l'hôtel indiqué; je frappe, on ouvre; je vois une femme qui n'est ni jeune, ni jolie, ni prévenante. Je demande si M. Rousseau est chez lui; *il y est et il n'y est pas*, dit cette femme, que je crois tout au plus sa gouvernante, et elle me demande mon nom.—*Goldoni's Life of himself*, vol. iii. p. 128.

He is abroad and yet at home; hast wit
To fathom that?

Dic. Abroad, and yet at home!—
I reach you not.

Ceph. And yet 'tis even so.
Mark me; his mind's abroad and on the wing
For dainty verse: himself, or body politic,
Is all aloft within, composing tragedy.

Dic. Euripides, thou art a happy man,
Who hast a *servant of so trim a wit!—
But, boy, call forth your master; here is one
Requires his presence straight.

Ceph. It may not be. (*with dignity.*)

Dic. (entreating) Nay,† let my wishes sway thee,—here
I plant

Myself, and with this knocker rain a show'r
Of blows, till he do shew himself. What hoa!
Euripides, my sweet, my toy—my darling—

* Cephisophon (who passes here for the valet of Euripides) was that poet's principal actor, and is said to have assisted him in the composition of his pieces. It was in consequence of an intrigue between Cephisophon and the wife of Euripides, that the tragedian retired to the court of Archelaus, king of Macedon. The sophist who forged the Letters of Euripides is so little

aware of this circumstance, that he has made the poet address one of his longest and most friendly epistles to the very person who had thus dishonoured him.

† From the continual use of the word 'αλλ' in this part of the scene, it is probable that a great deal of mimicry was used here in the acting.

Euripides, I say, lend me your ear,—
 And shut it, an thou wilt, to all beside:
 'Tis Dicæopolis that calls, the man
 Of Chollis.*

SCENE IV.

EURIPIDES, DICÆOPOLIS, CEPHISOPHON.

Eurip. Friend, I have no leisure—

Dic.

Granted—

To quit your wheel—but you may turn about.

Eurip. I may not, sir, subscribe to this your pleasure.

Dic. Nay, let my wishes sway thee—

Eurip.

I'll content thee—

I turn upon my wheel,† observe, and face you;—

But to descend—time speeds, and I want leisure.

* It was usual among the Athenians, after a man's name, to specify the tribe or borough to which he belonged: of their fondness for these adjuncts a curious proof will be mentioned hereafter. It is a constant practice with Aristophanes to pun upon them, and to apply such fictitious titles as suit the occasion. In the present instance, the term Chollis is meant to ridicule the *lame* characters, which Euripides sometimes introduced upon the stage, with a view of exciting more compassion for them:

Dicæopolis supposes that of preference he would open his gates to a man of that description. This is wit of no very high order, and would nearly be tantamount in English to saying of a drunken citizen, that he belonged to Portsokeken ward, or of a lame man, that he was an inhabitant of Cripple-gate.

† The wit or malice of the dramatist introduces Euripides to the audience, seated aloft in the *encyclema*, a machine used by the Greeks for the purpose of pro-

Dic. Euripides—

Eurip. What wouldst thou, clam'rous friend?

Dic. Resolve me first, my most poetic sir:

Why seated thus aloft to write your tragedies?

Will not the terra firma serve your purpose?

No marvel that your muse is rickety,

And sends a train of limping children forth.

Again, that tragic dress and scurvy garb—

Proof clear why all your characters are beggars;

But, sweet Euripides, I have a suit—

You see me on my knees—some rag, I pray you,

From forth your tragic wardrobe; I have speech

To make before the CHORUS; if I falter,

Or once prove gravell'd for the lack of matter,

My life must pay the forfeit.

Eurip. Say what rags

Will best content? Wouldst have the same that garb'd

Old *Æneus at his contest?—'twas indeed

A sorry wight!

Dic. But he was sorrier,

Whose dress I'm suitor for.

Eurip. Mayhap, blind Phoenix—

ducing theatrical effect. It was of a semi-circular form within, and covered above, and represented the objects contained in it, as in a house.

* Æneus, Phoenix, Bellerophon, &c. are all names of tragedies composed by Euripides. The subjects of them are too well known to require a notice.

Dic. 'Twas one more out of Fortune's favours still—

Eurip. Whom may he mean! or whose the robe may
suit him!

Speak you of Philoctetes, friend, the beggar?

Dic. You miss the mark a hundred miles in beggary.

Eurip. I reach you: 'twas the robe worn by Bellerophon—

Dic. 'Twas one, in truth, of the same stamp: lame, beg-
garly,—

A man that had large gift of speech and tongue.

Eurip. 'Tis *Telephus of Mysia.

* It appears (vide Poinset's translation of Aristophanes) that Euripides wrote two plays of this name, neither of which has come down to us: and it is therefore impossible to say with what justice they underwent so much ridicule from the comic poets. Telephus was the reputed son of Hercules and the beautiful Auge. It was one of those marriages, of which Homer has left so naïve a description in the third of those hymns attributed to him, and which were so common in the romantic age of Greece, and the chivalrous times of modern Europe. The offspring of this intrigue was exposed in a forest and there suckled by a bitch. The father of Auge, having more correct notions of duty than his

daughter, ordered her to be sold for a slave. She fell into the hands of Teuthras, king of Mysia; and her attractions made so strong an impression on that monarch that he immediately adopted her for his daughter. We find the Mysian king soon after disposing of her in marriage to her own son, whose real birth was of course unknown to all the parties; and who had commanded the gratitude of Teuthras by the vigour with which he had defended his kingdom and throne for him. Auge, accustomed to the embraces of Hercules, disdained the arms of a mere mortal, and determined to assassinate this aspirant to her bed. A lucky prodigy prevented the deed. Telephus, apprised of what was intend-

Dic.

Thou hast hit it.

Thou wouldst not do the thing might cross my ends:—

The loan of those same sorry rags I beg you.

Eurip. (to his servant) Reach them, and crown his wishes,
boy—they lie

Above the Thyestean rags, midway

'Twixt them and Ino's.

Ceph. (to Dicæopolis) Sir, you are possess
Of all you wish.

Dic. (dressing himself) Now Jove (and as the god*
Of loop'd and window'd raggedness I pray you)
Your sacred blessing while I try to garb me

ed for him, determined on revenge; and the sword was actually suspended over the head of his beautiful parent, when Auge calling with a loud voice upon Hercules, a discovery fortunately took place, and Telephus very happily committed neither parricide nor incest. It was no doubt in the scene where Telephus designed to murder his mother that the disguise was assumed which Aristophanes so severely ridicules. The tomb of the beautiful Auge was still shewn in the time of Pausanias. See that interesting writer's *Arcadiacs*.

* In addressing the gods, it was usual with the ancients to prefix

some epithet suited to the occasion. Dicæopolis derives his Deity's attribute, in the present case, from the numerous holes which the tattered robe exhibited, and which he holds up at the time to the light. The capacities of the German language, which, in power of compounding words, almost equals the Greek, have enabled Mr. Schlegel, who has translated this scene, to give the very words of the original.

O Zeus Umschauer und Durchschauer
überall!

Hilf mir, mich auszukleiden aufs elendeste, &c.

In plight most miserable. Thou hast done me
 Most timely grace, Euripides:—wouldst win
 My whole affection? add a loan, (it were
 Not fitting to divorce it from these rags)
 And cast upon my head a Mysian bonnet.
 I must put on the beggar, and dislikening
 The truth,* be what I am, and seem what I
 Am not—possessing the spectators here
 Of my true bearing, while the CHORUS† gape,
 Unweeting who it is that speaks, and bearing
 All taunts and jeers I chuse to put upon them.

Eurip. Thou shew'st a teeming wit—want shall not fool
 it. (*giving a bonnet.*)

Dic. ‡For thee, heaven prosper thee;—for Telephus
 Befall what lies within my thoughts: I have
 A pregnant wit, and words flow plentifully.
 But softly, I must have a beggar's staff.

Eurip. Here's one unto your hand, take it, and let
 Your back cast shadow on these doors.

Dic. Seest, my soul,
 That we must fain divorce us from this gate?
 And yet my needs still ask a world of tire;

* Quoted from the Telephus.

† Euripides is here ridiculed for
 making his Choruses take little
 part in the action of the drama,

but either telling long fables, or
 impertinently questioning and an-
 swering the characters.—*Gray.*

‡ Quoted from the Telephus.

Rub oil upon thee, soul;—twist, wriggle, crouch,
 Till he do crown thy wishes—good Euripides,
 Favour me with a beggar's basket; 'tis
 No matter though a *link have singed it.

Eurip.

What

Thy need on't?

Dic.

None—beyond the wish to have it.

Eurip. Away, and quit my doors: thou breedest trouble.

Dic. (aside) A pestilence upon thee! *(aloud)* Happy
 bard,

Heaven fortune thee, as erst thy †lady mother!

Eurip. Wilt thou begone?

* The scholiast explains this passage by saying, that elderly people, who were slow in their motions, used to preserve their lighted links by carrying them in a basket.

† Aristophanes is here preparing the blow, which he presently levels at the parentage of Euripides, and which has given just cause of offence to the amiable and excellent translator of the Greek tragedians. We learn from the best authorities, says that learned person, that the parents of Euripides were persons of rank and fortune, particularly that his mother was of very noble birth; for no regard is due to Aristophanes, who spared no

good man, (Mr. Potter would have written more advisedly if he had said, who spared no bad man,) and who hated Euripides! The authorities to which Mr. Potter alludes, I presume, are Suidas and Moschopulus; both which writers derive their testimony from Philochorus, an author who lived nearly 200 years after the person to whose parentage he testifies. It is probable that Aristophanes was better acquainted with the real state of the case, and that he had some grounds for a charge which he has repeated more than once in his plays, and which, whether true or false, is disgraceful only to himself.

Dic. Not till I have my craving:
One little cup, so please you; one whose lip
Hath lost its wholeness—

Eurip. Take it and begone:
Your presence breeds disturbance.

Dic. (aside.) Would you knew
The mischief and the ills you breed yourself!
(*Aloud*) But, sweet Euripides! I fain would have
A pipkin with a cleanly *sponge to wipe it.

Eurip. The man will rob me of a tragedy complete:
Content your wish with this and now away. (*giving a pip-*
kin.)

Dic. I have an ear to your request: one thing
Remains: that one not granted me—I am
A ruin'd man—crown it and I am gone
For ever. Telephus bore leaves and herbs;—
A scantling of the same within my basket.

Eurip. The man will be my ruin; see, 'tis granted:
(*giving him leaves.*)

A whole play lost, as I'm a living person.

Dic. This timely grace completes me: I retire—

* All the requests of Dicæopolis shew a wish to exhibit the very extreme of poverty. The scholiast gives one or two explanations of this passage. One of them is curious, as it shews that noisy chil-

dren were quieted among the Greeks much in the same way that they are among the lower orders in England, and that a sponge dipped in honey supplied the place of Godfrey's Cordial.

It is too plain my presence breeds offence.

These eyes* know not to turn their view discreet

On mighty men and pay them terms of honour—

A pize upon't, was ever such a wretch!

I have forgot the primeest thing of all.

(*Addressing Euripides*) Thou dearest, best of men—I pray
thee now

With most petitionary vehemence—

Crown but this one, one longing; if I ask

Aught more, all plagues and maladies light on me!—

Throw for the tender mercy one small potherb—

Thou canst not lack,—thy mother will supply thee.

Eurip. Most frontless impudence! shut-to the door,
boy.† (*The Encyclema closes. Euripides and Cephisophon retire.*)

* Quoted from the Telephus.

† The humour of this whole scene may probably, to a modern reader, seem carried too far: but Aristophanes, a diligent observer of the signs of the times, knew well what he was about. Grandeur and ideal elevation—the contrast between internal liberty and external necessity, and the formation thereby of the human mind to the power of suffering with dignity and constancy; these had hitherto been the grand objects of the Greek tragedy, to which Æschylus had

directed the sublime seriousness of his mind, and Sophocles his severe wisdom. But under Euripides, the “Attic tragedy of stateliest and most regal argument” was fast degenerating into homeliness and effeminacy; and the effect upon the public manners was becoming obvious. Æschylus had written like a man to whom the heroic and the supernatural were his own natural atmosphere: Sophocles had drawn them, as Socrates was said to have done wisdom, into the circle of humanity: the

Dic. We must be gone, and that without a potherb.
 Now comes the tug of war.—Art well advis'd
 To what encounter, heart of mine, thou'rt buckled,
 Who soon must proffer speech and full defence
 For Sparta?—forward, soul! the barriers are
 Before thee: what! dost loiter, hesitate?
 Hast not imbib'd the spirit of Euripides?

pride of Euripides was to lift up the veil which hung between the great departed and the moderns, between the heroic and the ordinary life, and to shew that imperfection was common to both. Love, which had hitherto been nearly excluded from the drama, became, under his corrupting hands, the prominent feature of the stage; the exhibition of passion and not the formation of character was the aim of most of his tragedies; and those sufferings, which human flesh is heir to, and which it was the moral and useful object of his predecessors to keep balanced and in repose, he delights by every adventitious circumstance to represent as overpowering. "He is always endeavouring," (says a writer who has estimated every part of the ancient drama with the powers of an intuitive perception,) "to move, and for the sake of emotion he not only violates probability but even the

connexion of his pieces. He is strong in his pictures of misfortune; but he often claims our compassion not for the inward agony of the soul, nor for pain which the suffering individual endeavours to overcome and to bear with manly fortitude, but for the unreserved expression of bodily misery. He is fond of reducing his heroes to the condition of beggars, of allowing them to suffer hunger and want, of exhibiting them with all the external signs of mendicity, and displaying their tattered rags."—*Schlegel's Lectures on Dramatic Literature*, vol. i. p. 146. The person, whose acute mind perceived all this and foresaw the consequences, was not a mere buffoon, as those who are utterly unacquainted with the nature and object of his writings have been pleased to term Aristophanes, but a real benefactor to his country.

But I commend thee;—to the block, sad heart—
And then to death: yet shrink not, but deliver
Your sentiments as please you; forward, heart,
Pluck courage;—to the contest—bravely, bravely now.

SCENE V.

CHORUS, SEMI-CHORUS, DICÆOPOLIS.

CHORUS.

What course art pursuing?
What saying and doing?
Hath shame from thy face
Snatch'd a final embrace,
Or do ribs of cold iron
Thy heart, man, environ,
That thus you lay down
Your neck for a whole town,
And singly dare close
With a myriad of foes,
Opposing and closing
And learnedly prosing,
To prove with glib tongue
That the rest are all wrong
And yourself in the right?

SEMI-CHORUS.

'Tis no equal fight:—

But his visage, see, wears

No doubts and no fears,

And he bears the first brunt

With invincible front.

Then to it—pursue it, (*turning to Dic.*)

I wish thee well through it:

Not a moment, friend, miss,

For thy own choice, I wiss,

Thy courage first hired

Inspired and fired

To face and embrace

A sharp trial like this.

Dic. *Construe me kindly, gentlemen spectators,
That, †garb'd as you behold, I yet presume

* Dicæopolis here assumes the character of the poet, or rather, as M. Poinset says, (alluding to the quotations introduced from Euripides,) it is at once Aristophanes, Dicæopolis, and Telephus, who address the audience. The great object of this Parabasis is to excite indignation against a war, which had already lasted six years,

by ascribing its commencement to a personal affront, received by the celebrated Aspasia.

† The poet's conceit for thus dressing, or rather undressing, his worthy citizen, before he begins his dangerous address, will hardly surprise those, who have seen in what manner the two allegorical persons, by whom the New and

To make your town my topic and discourse.
 The Comic Muse, whatever some may think,
 Hath yet her sense and partage of what's right:
 Harsh I allow my speech, and little palatable,
 Its truth, however, none shall dare impeach.
 The charge of Cleon shall not now hold good,
 That I commit your city's reputation
 And flush her face, careless of strangers' presence.
 We are *alone; bent on that strife and war
 Of high contending bards, when strangers are
 Away, and due returns of yearly tribute
 Bring no confederates as yet to Athens.
 We are alone:—unmix'd and unalloy'd:—
 The true and genuine grain of Athens; guiltless
 Of chaff immix'd; for chaff I call—the †sojourners.—

Old Times are advocated in so inimitable a manner in the comedy of the Clouds, were exhibited to the audience. See the Preliminary Discourse.

* During the Choæ or Feast of Pitchers, a festival which lasted only one day, all persons but citizens were excluded from the theatrical representations, then held in an inclosed place near Athens, called the Lenæum. Authors generally therefore kept their pieces in reserve for the greater Dionysia, a festival which occurred about one

month after the former, and which lasted for several days. Strangers then came from all parts to partake of the theatrical entertainments of Athens, so superior to what any other city of Greece could exhibit; and no small benefit was derived to that city from the sums thus spent in it. The plays began early in the morning, and lasted, almost without intermission, during the day. See the Preliminary Discourse.

† The population of Athens consisted of three sorts—the free-

Well then: to my heart's core I hate the folk
 Of Lacedæmon, sirs:—O for an earthquake,
 Such as the god from *Tænarus' heights once sent,
 To level her proud city with the dust!
 For I'm a partner in your grief: I mourn,
 Like you, my trees† destroyed, my vintage lost.

men, the slaves, and the *metics*, or sojourners. If the latter derived considerable advantages from their residence in a commercial and polished town like Athens, the pride of democracy also subjected them to many indignities: and the comic theatre, always the mirror of public manners, was not averse from recalling these degradations occasionally to the recollection of the audience.

* Neptune had a temple of great repute on the top of Tænarus; and it was for a violation committed by the Spartans against this holy sanctuary (see Pausan. *Mess. c. 24.*) that the awful calamity mentioned in the text was sent as a visitation. The earthquake, says the English historian of Greece, following the authorities of Thucydides, Diodorus and Plutarch, came suddenly at mid-day, with a violence never before heard of. The youths of the principal families, assembled in the gymnasium at the appointed hour for exercise,

were in great numbers crushed by its fall; many of both sexes and of all ages were buried under the ruins of other buildings: the shocks were repeated; the earth opened in several places; vast fragments from the summits of Taygetus were tumbled down its sides; in the end only five houses remained standing in Sparta, and it was computed that twenty thousand lives were lost.—*Mitford's Hist. of Greece*, vol. ii. p. 370.

† The general spirit of cruelty exercised in Grecian warfare may be seen by a passage in Plato's *Republic*, lib. v. It is justly remarked by Mr. Mitford, that in the Theban war, when Athens and Thebes were engaged on opposite sides, we hear of no ravage of the Attic fields by the powerful armies of Boeotia, nor of any attempt against Boeotia in the occasional absence of its forces. Both states sent troops to act against each other, at a distance from the territories of both in Pa-

And yet, sweet friends, (for I would fain believe
 That none but friends haunt here, and therefore take
 Large warrant to my boldness,) wherefore blame
 The Spartans only for this ill? ourselves,—
 (Not the whole town, you'll please to mark that, sirs,
 Within your memories)—not the whole town,
 But some among us, meddling fellows, counterfeits
 Of the true Attic mintage; men, mere bankrupts
 In name and honour, and a bastard breed
 Of citizens at best, began the warfare
 With charges and vexatious informations
 'Gainst the short-cloak'd Megarians. Did my patriot
 Set eyes upon a cucumber, a sucking pig,
 A hare, an onion, or a lump of *salt,
 Forsooth the articles were contraband,—
 "Quick with them to the hammer, here are goods
 From Megara!"—and this perhaps was nothing,
 Smacking too much of our accustom'd manner
 To give offence—but here, sirs, was the rub:
 Some sparks of ours, †hot with the grape, had stol'n

loponnesus; both remaining quiet at home, as if by compact. Both states had apparently learnt wisdom from these earlier proceedings of the Peloponnesian war, of which the comedies of Aristophanes remain so valuable a document.

* Salt formed a considerable part of Megarian commerce. It was collected from the rocks near their principal port Nisæa.

† Literally, men drunk with playing at the game of *cottabus*. As other allusions are made to this

A mistress of the game,—Simætha nam'd,—
 From the Megarians; her doughty townsmen
 (For the deed mov'd no small extent of anger)
 Reveng'd the affront upon *Aspasia's train,

game in the course of this work, the following description of it is inserted, taken from Potter's *Archæologia*, vol. ii. p. 405. "A piece of wood being erected, another was placed on the top of it, with two dishes hanging down from each extremity, in the manner of scales: beneath each dish was placed a vessel full of water, wherein stood a statue, composed for the most part of brass. They who played at cottabus stood at some distance, holding a cup of water or wine, which they endeavoured to throw into one of the dishes, that the dishes by that weight might be knocked against the head of the statue under it. The person who threw in such a manner as to spill least of his water, and to knock the dish with the greatest force upon the statue, was conqueror, and was thought to reign in his mistress's affections, which was the thing to be learnt by this pastime." The exploit in the text seems therefore to have been a very likely deduction from the amusement.

* The name of Aspasia is well known in history as the mistress, and afterwards the wife, of Pericles. The charge made against her in the text, by the plain-speaking poet, is confirmed by Plutarch (see his *Life of Pericles*) and repeated by the author of the French *Anacharsis*. Elle (*Aspasie*) osa former une société de courtisanes, dont les attrait et les faveurs devaient attacher les jeunes Athéniens aux intérêts de leur fondatrice. Quelques années auparavant, toute la ville se fût soulevée à la seule idée d'un pareil projet; lors de son exécution, il excita quelques murmures. (*Voy. du Jeune An. tom. i. p. 520.*) These sentiments are very creditable; for language more complimentary might have been expected from a Frenchman to a lady, who by assembling about her all that was estimable among the men, and amiable among the women; by raising the standard of conversation and establishing that system of manners which consults self-love most effectually by sacrificing

And bore away a brace of her fair damsels.
 All Greece anon gave note of martial prelude;
 And what the cause of war? marry, three strumpets.
 Our modern Jove meantime took fire : he thunder'd—
 Lighten'd—launch'd thunderbolts of words, and *stirr'd
 And mix'd Greece universal to her centre.
 Next came a train of laws, writ †scolia-fashion,
 And borrow'd from the Rhodes-composer's vein,
 " That land nor market-place (so went their tenor)
 Be open to the citizens of Megara;
 That their feet find no resting-place on sea
 Or ‡terra-firma." What could they, poor souls!

largely to that of others, gave the first idea of what has since been emphatically called good company.

* The word *stirred*, in this well known description of Pericles, is translated literally. The poet continually uses it in his plays when speaking of those turbulent characters which naturally abounded in the free republics of Greece; and it corresponds exactly with the *agitateur* of later times. The translator takes great pleasure in acknowledging his obligations for this remark to a gentleman whose active and powerful genius makes both ancient and modern lan-

guages equally his own—the Hon. William Spencer.

† The nature of the *scolia*, or drinking-songs of the ancients, will be explained in the comedy of the Wasps. The poet here alludes to a famous *scolion* by Timoleon of Rhodes, and insinuates that this act of Pericles respecting the unfortunate Megarians was more like the result of convivial intemperance than of wise policy.

‡ Another decree brought forward by Charinus (most probably a partizan of Pericles) proposed, that there should be an eternal and irreconcilable hatred between the two states; that if any Mega-

Meantime, who found that famine press'd upon them?
 They turn'd them suitors to the Spartans; begging
 This Act, this strumpet Act, (for such I needs
 Must call it,) might be instantly repeal'd.
 We, tho' the suit was urgently repeated,
 Turn'd a deaf* ear. What would you have of this
 But war and arms?—they came anon—" This look'd
 But ill in Sparta," one of you observes,
 " Nor fitted that she meddled in the business."
 'Tis good: now tell me, my sagacious man

rian entered the territory of the Athenians, he should be put to death; and that the Athenian generals, when they took the accustomed oath, should swear besides to make an incursion twice a year into Megaris.—Eng. Plut. vol. ii. p. 40.

* The embassy of the Spartans and the answer of the Athenians are recorded in the incomparable historian of the Peloponnesian war. (Thuc. lib. v. c. 139.) The offences there imputed to the Megarians are, that they had cultivated some sacred extralimitary land, and afforded an asylum to Athenian-runaway slaves. The frivolous, but often not the less real, causes of political events, are those which the gravity of history least condescends to mention; and Aristophanes, in

ascribing the rejection of the Spartan mediation to the affront received by Aspasia, might still speak from correct sources of private information. That the conduct of Pericles proceeded from personal hatred to the Megarians, as well as motives of sound policy, derives some confirmation from a fact mentioned by Plutarch, who states, that the Athenian statesman declined sailing with the fleet, which he sent to plunder Peloponnesus, under pretence of remaining at home to watch over the city, and keep the reins of government in his own hands, till the Peloponnesians should retire. No sooner had this event taken place than he invaded the Megarians in person and ravaged their whole country. Eng. Plut. Life of Per. p. 46.

Of observation, and say what best
Had fitted her? put case that one from Sparta
Had shipp'd him for *Seriphus, and had trick'd
Its townsmen of a whelp—then to the hammer
Sent it—say, would yourselves, like quiet men,
Have swallow'd the affront and rested you
At home?—not you, believe me: that same moment,
Three hundred ships, forestalling your revenge,
Had back'd the ocean; in the town had been
All pomp and circumstance of glorious war:—
The noise of soldiers tramping to and fro—
Captains and admirals in vast request—
Much sound of cashiers and arrears just paid—
Many a †Pallas scrubb'd and a new coat
Of gilt put on her—then what troops too pacing
The porch where officers dole out the corn!
What store of skins and tholes and puncheon-buyers!

* The poet, to convince his countrymen how sensible they would be themselves to any affront, selects an island belonging to them, which from its poverty was least subject to a robbery, and an article which would least be miss'd. It was a Seriphian who gave rise to an excellent answer of Themistocles, recorded by Plato. The islander reproached Themistocles with owing his reputation to

the country where he was born and not to his own personal merit. It is true, said the Athenian, had I been born in Seriphus I must have died in obscurity; but *you* would never have excited attention even if you had been born at Athens.

† The Athenians adorned the prows of their ships with wooden images of this goddess.

What stock of garlic and of olives!—mark
 The nets of onions and the garlands;—note
 The sprats, the minstrels, and the bleeding noses.
 Then too the *dock yard—bless us, gracious heaven!
 How it fills presently with spars and yards,
 And timber for the fashioning of oars—
 What sound of pegs and pins and oars and oar-straps!
 What din of pipes and boatswains—what a tribe
 Of rowing-men, what screams and shrill-voic'd whistling!
 Stretch I beyond the mark, or had there less
 Been done? Indeed there had not; and suppose ye
 "That Telephus will not e'en do the same?"
 O witless, who guess otherwise!

Semi-chorus.

Say you?

Why now, thou rogue—thou villain—thou, a man
 That hath not one small †obol in his purse
 To bless him—thou to turn foul mouth'd, forsooth,
 And twit our little sin of ‡sycophancy!
 Dipp'd as thou art and double-dy'd thyself in't.

* The present appearance of the Peiræus, says Mr. Douglas, now only inhabited by the monks of San Spiridion, forms a melancholy contrast with the bustling scene so admirably described by Aristophanes.

† This coin will often come before the reader in the course of

this work: it was in value about a penny. The obol occurs as a Russian coin in Mad. Cottin's pathetic tale of Elizabeth.

‡ The word *sycophancy* is used here in the sense which it bears in the original language, and means *the act of giving information before the magistracy*. The nature and

Semi. Lacks his charge proof or justice? there, so help me,

The question lies. Marry, I hold he speaks
Pure truth.

Semi. Lack proof or not, 'tis not for such
As him to deal out such reproaches, nor
Shall it be done without the taste of danger. (*Advancing in
a threatening manner towards Dicaopolis.*)

Semi. (*interposing*) Back, on your life—feel but this man
one blow,

And earth no longer holds your heels upon it. (*Here a
short struggle between the divisions of the Chorus:
the Coryphaeus of the first division, being seized by
his adversary in the manner of the wrestling-school,
implores assistance from *Lamachus.*)

Semi. Help and aidance thou, whose eye

† Looks the lights that fire the sky;

extent of this most odious practice in the free republic of Athens will be fully explained hereafter: there is scarcely one of the plays of Aristophanes in which the sycophant, or public informer, is not held up to the severest ridicule.

* Lamachus is described as a man of birth, who, even in early life, had seen much service; but a soldier of fortune, of a dissipated

turn, and of no great weight, either by abilities or property. He had not yet achieved those actions to which Aristophanes, in a subsequent play, pays a willing tribute of applause.

† This is a favourite mode of expression with Aristophanes. As Lamachus is here said to look lightning, so the senate in the comedy of the Knights are said to

Help and aidance thou, whose crest
 Floats devoid of pause or rest!
 Hero, warrior, wardsman, friend,
 Lamachus, bring aid or send.
 If there be, who bears command
 O'er troop or regiment, out of hand
 From such be joint assistance given:—
 I call between the earth and heav'n.

SCENE VI.

DICÆOPOLIS, CHORUS, LAMACHUS (*in full military
 costume.*)

Lam. Loud martial tumult breaks upon my ear;
 Rages the fight, or is some foeman near?
 Who asks for aid, or from its peaceful case
 Wakes the stern terrors of my gorgon's face?

Dic. (Affecting terror) O Lamachus, in crests and co-
 horts great—

Semi. List not; 'tis he that in a flood of words,
 A very torrent I may say, abuses
 Our town entire.

Dic. (to Lam.) Extend your gracious pardon
 That one like me, at war with fortune, dar'd
 Advance such speech and mould such idle tales.

look mustard; a messenger in the tor in the Ecclesiastusæ, the hypo-
Birds carries in like manner the trimma, &c. &c.
war-dance in his face, and a sena-

Lam. And what their subject?

Dic. That hath quite escap'd me—

Those arms have bred a clean vertigo in me—

A boon, sir knight—a boon—remove that shield

In gorgon terrors clad.

Lam. 'Tis done. (*Laying down his shield.*)

Dic. Once more

I'm your petitioner:—upon the ground

Dispose it.

Lam. Be your will obey'd.

Dic. Still I'm

A suitor—one feather from that bushy helmet.

Lam. (*giving a feather*) Rest you content—'tis done.

Dic. Now, sir, your hand

Upon my heart, I feel a qualmishness

Come over me: That crest (in truth it hath

A searching power) hath reach'd my very bile.

Semi. Wouldst use a quill to tickle thee, and rid
Thy throat of its *incumbrance? (*Giving a quill.*)

* Some parts of this scene will remind the reader of Mr. Mitford's remark on Aristophanes, that "he could write equally for the lowest and highest ranks, and could be at the same time a consummate politician and a consummate buffoon." The whole scene, revolting as it is in some of its parts, has been faith-

fully translated, that the reader may have a perfect conception of all the bearings of the Old Comedy. The assumed terrors of Di-cæopolis are supposed by M. Brumoy to be a parody on the interview between Hector and his child in the Iliad.—Le Théâtre des Grecs, tom. v. p. 419.

Dic. What should hinder?

This quill, I guess, bears nurture from—

Lam. A bird.

Dic. Belike the mock-bird, or some coxcomb bipped.

Lam. O, thou shalt howl for this.

Dic. Not so; force rules not

With us,

Lam. This to your chief?—and from a pauper—
A fellow of no mark or likelihood!

Dic. Rage pours a cloud of error on thy reason,
Nor pierces this disguise.

Lam. Art not a pauper?

Dic. I—am an honest man,* a citizen,
Whose dotage of ambition stretches not
Beyond the mark,—a warrior, and a true one,
Who sign'd me captain ere I serv'd as general,
Whose better sense can spurn at paltry pelf,
Nor leave a stain upon the nobler parts
Of soldiership, beguiling them of praise.

Lam. Nay, for my office I was voted in it.

Dic. (angrily) Marry, three cuckoos voted you into it.
'Tis this excites my spleen and love of peace.

* Aristophanes appears to reproach Lamachus with not having gone through the steps of the service. The original expresses these sarcasms upon the ambitious and mercenary spirit of the general in a manner perfectly Aristophanic.

It treads upon my patience, when I see
 Men of grey hairs still serving in the wars,
 While youngsters like yourself, whose pride should hold
 A lustier maintenance, shirk all the toil.
 Some for three drachmas serve in distant Thrace;
 Such are the breed *Tisameno-Phænippi,
 And such again the stock Panurg'-Hipparchidæ:
 Others there are that haunt with senseless Chares:
 There's a third tribe who post them in Chaonia;
 Such are the race Geræto-Theodorians,
 And that same crew the Diomei-Alazones:
 Others again take wing for Gela, Camarina,
 And †places that might win mirth's utmost laughter.

* There is generally some covert meaning in the names of Aristophanes, both persons and places; his readers' feet are always treading on spring-traps. There is much humour and more contempt expressed in those which occur at present. By coupling Tisamenos with Phænippus, the poet engrafts servitude of the lowest kind upon sensuality and incontinence; by compounding Geres with Theodorus, and settling them at Chaonia, the dramatist entails softness and effeminacy upon vices still more odious. The compound Panurg'-Hipparchidæ is an ingenious way

of telling Hipparchides that he is a scoundrel, as the term Diomei-Alazones reproaches a whole Athenian tribe with being mere braggarts. The Diomeian tribe did not assume a more heroic character in times posterior to Aristophanes: for it was among them that the sixty wits (γελωτοποιοί) who registered the squibs, the sarcasms, the follies and eccentric characters of Athens, held their sittings, which even the tumult of the Macedonian war did not disturb. *Athenæus*, lib. xiv. p. 614.

† The word *Gela* in the preceding line approximates to a Greek

Lam. They but obey the powers that make them generals.

Dic. One little word. Whence comes it that yourself,
And such as you, find pay in every quarter,
While these are wont to look for it in vain? (*Pointing to
the audience.*)

You there, *Marilades,—those reverend hairs

word signifying *laughter*. Aristophanes fabricates a name, *Catagela*, as answering to it. It was thought better to substitute a line instead of using the name. The most distinguished citizens of Athens, as well as the worthless persons mentioned in the text, were fond of residing abroad, because it delivered them from the worst of all tyranny, the tyranny of an Attic mob. It was for this reason, Theopompus informs us, that Iphicrates generally lived in Thrace; that Timotheus took up his residence at Lesbos, Conon in Cyprus, and Chabrias in Egypt. A curious fact mentioned in Xenophon's *Hellenics* (lib. v. c. 2. s. 7.) shews that this feeling was not confined to the aristocracy of Athens.

* The poet addresses these words to some of the audience, whom he was fond of mixing up with the business on the stage. It was a jealousy of the same sort with that implied here, which ex-

cited endless convulsions in the Italian republics and filled Italy, like Greece, with crowds of miserable exiles: the nobles and the plebeians were always struggling for the exclusive possession of office and power. The state of Milan endeavoured to avoid these dissensions by enacting that every office, from the highest to the lowest, should be held conjointly by persons from the two orders. In the explosion of Florence in 1292, which arose from a similar source of contention, the circumstance of noble birth was actually converted into a crime and a punishment. To a similar eruption in the little republic of Brescia, proceeding from similar causes, we owe one of the masques of the Italian theatre, *The Bruzella*, a mixture of plebeian insolence, courage and knavery. *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes*, tom. iv. p. 65. ii. p. 301. et alibi.

Shew age and ripe experience,—say, what mission
 Hath fortun'd you? or where the court has seen you,
 A proud ambassador? That shaken head
 Says—none. And yet in whom doth more true modesty
 Abound, with zeal and industry, than him?
 Mayhap, Dracyllus and Euphorides,
 And you, my little *Holm-oak, have far'd better?
 You sure have serv'd as legates at the courts
 Of royal Ecbatane or at Chaonia?
 Still the same answer of negation made—
 Better have far'd the †son of Cæsyra
 And Lamachus; they have made revenue
 Of legs and courtly fees—and yet it was
 But yesterday their debts and ‡club-feasts earn'd

* Holm-oak is a name fabricated for the purpose of raising a laugh.

† Megacles. The Megacleidæ were among the most illustrious families of Athens. The poetical nuptials by which our author has united them to the family of Strepsiades in the comedy of the Clouds, were most probably intended to gratify the mirth of the lower citizens.

‡ The convivial temper of the Greeks led them very much to indulge in entertainments of this description. They were formed either by the guests sending each a particular dish, or by entrusting

one of the party to cater for the rest. In the latter case a pledge was generally given for the money expended: it commonly consisted of a ring and was termed *symbolus*: the contribution, whether in articles of food or in money, was called *symbola*, and the feast itself denominated *eranus*. (This word seems to have been applied at a later period to associations, much resembling the Friendly Societies, which were organised by the same practical statesman, to whom we are indebted for the extension of those still more admirable institutions, the Savings' Banks. Harpo-

From all their intimates the same advice

As those who empty urinals from windows

Are wont to give—"out of the way—begone!"

cration in voce *εφανισται*. Theophrastus. De Pauw. tom. i. p. 295.)

A fragment of Alexis, the comic poet, representing two persons accounting together for the expenses of an entertainment of this kind, may not improperly find place in a work, which endeavours to give a picture of Athenian manners: the caterer most probably on this occasion had been the keeper of the tavern where the feast was held.

A. I must have all accounted for:

Item by item, charge by charge;
or look ye:—

There's not a stiver to be had from me.

B. 'Tis but a fair demand.

A. What ho! within there!

(Calls to his servant.)

My style and tablets. (*Style and tablets are brought.*) Now, sir, to your reckoning.

B. To a salt herring—price—two farthings.

A. Good. (*Writes.*)

B. To muscles—three—

A. No villainy as yet. (*Writes.*)

B. Item, to eels—one obol—

A. Still you're guiltless.

(*Writes*)

B. Next came the radishes—yourselves allowed—

A. And we retract not—they were delicate

And good.

B. For these I touch two obols.

A. (*Aside.*) Tush!

The praise is in the bill—better our palates

Had been less riotous—onward.

B. To a rand

Of tunny fish—this charge will break a sixpence.

A. Dealst on the square? no filching?—no purloining?—

B. No, not a doit—thou'rt green, good fellow, green;

And a mere novice yet in market-prices.

Why, man, the palmer-worms have fix'd their teeth

Upon the kitchen-herbs.

A. Ergo—salt fish

Bears twice its usual price—call you that logic?

B. Nay, if you've doubts—to the fishmonger straight,

He lives and will resolve them.—

To a conger-eel—

Ten obols.

A. I have nothing to object:

Proceed.

Lam. If words and deeds of this bold strain may pass
With sufferance—but such it is to live
In a *democracy.

Dic. These words will cease
When you cease taking pay.

Lam. (*eagerly*) That will be never:
No spot in Pelops' island but shall see me
And know its enemy. By land and sea—
With foot and horse—I'll plague and harass them.

Dic. Say you? then be it known to all of Sparta—
Possess we too Bœotia's folk and Megara
With a like notice, that themselves have footing
In this my market and may trade at will—
For Lamachus I do exclude him whole.

B. Item—broil'd fish—a
drachma.

A. Fie on't!—
I was a man, and here's the fever
come
With double force.

B. There's wine too in the bill,
Bought when my masters were
well half-seas over—

Three pitchers, at ten obols to the
pitcher. (*Cætera desunt.*)

Ath. lib. iii. c. 87. edit. Schw.

* Theophrastus, in his character
of an oligarchist, has painted with
his usual acuteness some of the
unpleasant feelings to which the
higher classes at Athens were sub-

jected by their necessary inter-
course with their less polished but
not less haughty fellow-citizens.
Theophr. Char. 26. The powerful
strokes, with which Mr. Mitford
has characterised the ordinary con-
duct of Cymon at Athens will
apply to every man who sought
high political power in that impe-
rious city; it was, says he, a con-
tinual preparation for an election,
not, as in England, to decide whe-
ther the candidate should or should
not be a member of the legislature,
but whether he should be head of
the commonwealth or an exile.
vol. ii. p. 364.

CHORUS.

He hath the better in the argument,
And wins the people wholly to his purpose:
'Tis time we doff'd our upper robes, and claim'd
A hearing for our anapestic strain.

PARABASIS.

Noble sirs, since the stage did your bard first engage,
 be it told to his honour and glory;
That with tales of his wit and his sense never yet
 came he forward with flattering story;
But since it appears there are some mock your ears,—
 (and it asks not his nicer discerning
To observe how like wind an Athenian's mind
 shifts and alters at every turning)—
Saying loud that his Muse dares your city abuse,
 scoffs and taunts on its members much dealing;—
Your excuse, if at large we now answer the charge,
 to your better form'd judgments appealing.
But first we must move for arrears of old love;—
 with submission we give you to know it;—
For with whom is it fit that there rest larger debt,
 than with him your great teacher and poet?
His advice and his cares sav'd your too easy ears
 from foreign deceit and intrusion:

Well he knew their stale tricks and a padlock dar'd fix
 on those mouths which gap'd wide for delusion.
 Came there legate of yore from town inland or shore—
 made he speech or delivered oration?
 In beginning or end still the phrase did attend—
 “Ye men of the *violet nation.”
 Soon as ever was heard the magnificent word,
 praise came down in a plaudit of thunder;
 The sound was so sweet, that each breech and its seat
 for mere joy parted instant asunder.
 Next some yea-forsooth knave had a hearing to crave,—
 (*mimics*) all claim be abjur'd—all pretension;—
 But he dropp'd in smooth Greek the terms “toily and sleek,”
 and each ear was anon all attention.
 —Sleek and oily!—the phrase might but little amaze,
 with anchovies if join'd, it is granted:—

* The violet was the favourite and distinguishing flower of the Athenians. Ionians in their origin, they saw in the *ion* or violet, an allusion to the name of their founder. While Sparta therefore was characterised as the *Dory-stephanos* or javelin-crowned city, the Athenians took pride in being called the *io-stephanoi* or violet-crowned.

† For this epithet, (allusive, no doubt, to the olives which grew

so plentifully in Attica,) the countrymen of Aristophanes were indebted to the great poet of their neighbours, the Thebans. An anecdote connected with it will shew the extent to which those rival states carried the animosities, which have been noticed at the commencement of this work. In one of his dithyrambic odes, Pindar had paid a splendid tribute of applause to those exertions, which Athens had displayed in

But such titles to wait on a town and a state!—

well—it gain'd what the speaker most wanted.

For such love bold and true all your gratitude's due:—

further claims your appellant has grounded,

Saying, strangers were school'd how a town should be rul'd,
on the laws of democracy founded.

'Tis for this, sirs, they fling, when their tribute they bring,
on our bard looks of warm recognition;—

Best of men!—him no fear from his task can deter
of honest and bold admonition.

And so far, sirs, hath Fame tongued his boldness and name,
that when Sparta to Persia sent *mission,

behalf of Grecian freedom at the battle of Artemisium. The poet styled her the bulwark of Greece; but in the heat of his enthusiasm he so far forgot himself as to apply an epithet, which Athenian ingenuity easily twisted from its intended meaning, and applied as a refutation of those sarcasms upon the rocky and barren soil of Attica, with which the well-fed Thebans used to meet the taunts of their wittier neighbours upon Boeotian dulness and gluttony. The Thebans felt the advantage which the poet had put into the hands of their rivals; and in revenge fined him in a large sum of money. Athenian gratitude amply compen-

sated the poet for this affront: a sum of money double the value of the fine imposed was given to him, and a statue erected to him near those of Harmodius and Aristogeiton. Attis. Mus. Des 1. Bandes. 2 heft. Nachbarliche Verhältnisse der Athener gegen die Böötier und Thebaner.

* From the papers found upon Artaphernes the Persian, (vide Thuc. lib. iv. c. 50.) it appears that several missions had been sent from Sparta to the court of Susa, notwithstanding the infamous transaction by which the first miscarried, to the great disgrace of the Athenians and their denizen, the son of Sitalces. (Thuc. lib. ii. c.

Her ambassadors tell, how the king sifting well,
 question'd deep and with learned precision.
 And foremost ask'd he, of the twain who at sea
 shew'd most prowess, commanding the ocean;—
 “ In which nation next teach does the bard by his speech
 and his taunts stir offence and commotion.
 Who,” says *he, “ most incline to that poet divine,
 to his counsels of wisdom low bending;
 In war shall that state most her fortunes make great
 and her morals at home best be mending.”
 Hence it comes, that for peace Sparta's sons never cease
 application and suit to be making;
 Hence the passionate heat with which they still treat
 fair Ægina in hand to be taking.

67.) Of the two questions proposed by the Persian monarch, whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the latter, none will deny the acuteness of political intellect indicated by the former.

* This pretended attention of the “Great King” to the muse of Aristophanes is most probably a mere jeu de théâtre. One monarch however, Dionysius of Sicily, paid the utmost court to the poet; he studied his comedies, learnt them by heart, and was stimulated by them to write himself for the

prize. Menander received the same attention from the monarchs of his times. While the mean jealousy of the Athenians gave the preference to the productions of Philemon, Menander saw his merits better estimated by foreigners, and was gratified at the same time by a solemn embassy from the monarch of Macedon, and a powerful squadron from the king of Egypt, deputed to convey the thanks and compliments of those sovereigns to the great comic poet of his day.

'Tis pretence, sirs, and wile :—they care nought for the isle;
 but our bard's best estates there are center'd,
 And once in their command, be ye sure, to his hand
 would an instant ejectment be tender'd.
 From his Muse never fear covert taunt then or sneer;
 she would spurn at the base prostitution;—
 She never was born to point finger of scorn
 at a virtuous or wise resolution.
 At a much higher game she makes effort and aim;
 and her toils, by the gods' help, succeeding,
 This your city elate she will lift into state,
 and her sons be to happiness leading;
 Not by largess and trick, not by praise that makes sick,
 drugg'd with falsehoods and specious caressing;
 But by truths of such bearing, that Virtue, if hearing,
 might give them her praise and her blessing.

Then *let Cleon at will
 Work his five fingers still;
 And standing aloof
 At his warp and his woof,
 Let him weave his web-tissues
 For foul-serving issues:—

* A break in the verse has been made here in conformity with the original. It was usual at the conclusion of the parabasis for the poet to introduce some lines in a

lighter measure, which the performer was required to pronounce *anapaests*, i. e. without taking breath. In technical language these lines were called a *παύση*.

With Truth at my side
 And with Honour my guide,
 My soul sets upon her,
 (To Athens' just honour)
 A guard that shall ne'er be subdu'd:—
 Thus I stand on my strength,
 And I keep at arm's length
 Our city's disgrace,—the poltroon and the lewd.

The CHORUS having thus manfully asserted the moral motives of their author, a division takes place, and the half chorus indulge themselves in an invocation: the muse to whom it is addressed was probably new to most of the poet's audience.

O, for a muse of fire,
 Of true Acharnian breed;
 A muse that might some strain inspire,
 Brightness, tone and voice supplying,
 Like sparks which, when our fish are frying,
 The windy breath of bellows raise
 From forth the sturdy holm-oak's blaze:
 What time our cravings to supply,
 Some sift the meal and some the *Thasian mixture try.
 O fly to my lips, strong Acharnian muse—
 And grant such a strain—'tis your wardsman that sues.

* Vide Suidam in voce Θάσιος.

Having delivered themselves of their invocation, the Semi-chorus proceed to unite themselves with the division from which they had separated. The full CHORUS assumes its proper character of old men, and with a piteous simplicity (rendered more laughable by the late invocation for strength and fire) states certain grievances under which the elderly men of the day laboured. Some allusions are most probably made here to passing events, with which we are unacquainted.

CHORUS.

Charges grave we elders have against our town and nation,
And thus prefer (who will demur) our ground of accusation:
Imprimis, we this well agree to be the height of slavery,
That men, whose naval fights we fought with so much zeal and bravery,
Should leave our age long war to wage with famine and with knavery.
In suits you cast us, then allow some barrister in training,
Some beardless boy, to jeer and joy and gird at our complaining:
For we're but mere nonentities—both ears and eyes are failing—
We are as pipes that long have lost all stop of sweet regaling.
Our staff and saviour, under favour, is this same *stick we're grappling,
And deity none else have we but what lies in a sapling.
Must such be seen—a mass of spleen—before those bars still pleading,
Where justice shrouds her form in clouds, the keenest ken misleading?—

* Literally our *Neptune the Supporter* is a staff.

The brief-fed spark knows well his mark and, soon as we're before ye,
 In haste uprises to display his powers of wit and story.
 With silent glee his word-traps he lays deftly and demurely,
 So feath'ly spread, that feet which tread on swords walk more securely.
 Long speech he plies—infers—denies—quips, quirps so quick bespatter,
 That in his hands our *Tithon stands a shred, a rent, a tatter;
 Like child at nurse, he's fain to purse his lips into a hollow;
 His temper crost, his suit is lost; and damages quick follow.
 A jest, a sport he leaves the court: and friends without advancing,
 Himself all tears, and in his ears a thousand mocks still dancing,
 "I'm trounc'd,—I'm cast," he groans at last; "and that same stock's gone
 off in
 Court-fees and law gratuities which should have bought my coffin."

The other division of the CHORUS then take their turn
 and follow in the same strain: how, say they, is it to be
 borne, that a man who has spent the vigour of his younger
 days in fighting such battles as those of Marathon, should in
 his latter days be oppressed with the proceedings of the law
 courts; that he who had been the †pursuer should now be-
 come the pursued: we should wish to know, they finish by
 saying, Whether Marpsias (*a noisy litigious orator of the*

. * The Chorus compare their
 friend to Tithonus, because that
 long-lived person was finally turned
 to a grasshopper, an insect dis-

tinguished by a shrill voice in a
 very slender body.

† The law-terms of the Athe-
 nians admit a pun here, which it
 was not possible to preserve.

day) has any thing to advance in contradiction to this? As Marpsias had the discretion to hold his tongue, the CHORUS proceed in full body by the mouth of their coryphæus or leader, to point these charges of oppression more particularly against two barristers of the times, Cephisodemus and Evathlus, both men of very indifferent character. The person who is stated as suffering from their insolence is Thucydides, the son of Milesius, a man who had formerly figured as the opponent of the great Pericles. The scholiasts have not recorded what particular trial it was, which is here so strongly alluded to: but it probably made a great noise at the period. The CHORUS conclude with a piece of advice to the audience, involving in it a name, which of all others Athens had least reason to hear mentioned with respect or reverence.

Messieurs, a word—your will denies
Repose and respite to our eyes:
Be rul'd by age then, and this be
The tenor of your next decree:—
“ By virtue of our sovereign power,
Enact we from this present hour;—
That pleadings all in this our state
Be held distinct and separate.
If old men ask the law's relief,
Some toothless counsel hold the brief:

Our younger men can aid want none,
 While fops exist and *Cleinias' son.
 The same observe we, when we press
 For fine, or damages assess;
 Let seniors judge the man in years,
 And youth pass judgment on its peers."

* The son of Cleinias was the too-illustrious Alcibiades, then starting into public life, and already contaminating all that was near him. Pericles, says the Abbé Barthelemi, authorised licentiousness: Aspasia spread the contagion, and Alcibiades gave an amiable colour to it. Who could refuse a poison which the Graces themselves seemed to administer? The young men of Athens fixed their eyes upon this dangerous model; and unable to imitate its beauties, they thought to approach it by copying and, above all, by exaggerating its defects. They became triflers, because he was frivolous; insolent, because he was presumptuous; independent of the

laws, because he paid no regard to morals or manners. Some of his followers, less rich but as prodigal as himself, exhibited an ostentatious wealth, which covered themselves with ridicule and their families with ruin: they transmitted these disorders to their descendants, and the influence of Alcibiades' character existed a long time after he himself had expired.—*Voyage du Jeune Anacharsis*, tom. i. p. 521. It is to be feared that Aristophanes himself shared in the general good-will towards the son of Cleinias; at least no comedy has come down to us, in which he is treated with that severity which a character so pregnant with mischief richly deserved.

ACT III.

THE third Act commences with a scene, for which we must make all the allowance due to comic fiction and the extravagance of the Old Comedy. Dicæopolis opens his market (making the scene of it in the space immediately before his house, and settling its boundaries with all the *precision of an Athenian): he appoints the proper officers (the †Agoranomi) to superintend it; he arms them with whips of strong leather, and proclaims free licence to all Peloponnesians, Bœotians and Megarians to trade there; stipulating this one condition, that Lamachus be not allowed to become a purchaser. Those bitter pests of Athenian society, the Informers, (or men of Phasis, as Aristophanes calls them in his usual way, punning upon a town of that name, and the Greek word, which implies the act of informing,) are also forbidden entrance. A pillar moreover is to be set up on which Dicæopolis, an exact observer of forms, proposes to inscribe, after the manner of

* Theophr. Char. 10. De Pauw. tom. ii. p. 25.

† The Agoranomi were the officers who took cognizance of all vendibles, except iron, in the public markets. They were ten or fifteen in number, and a certain

tribute was paid to them by all those who brought any thing to sell in the market. They were more particularly enjoined to see that no man wronged or circumvented another in buying or selling.

his country, the *terms and conditions of his treaty with Sparta. The first person who enters the market is a man of Megara with his two daughters. This victim to the terrible decree of Pericles salutes with filial affection an object which had so long been a stranger to his eyes, as an Athenian market; swearing by the †Philian Jupiter, that

* Pillars of this kind were erected not only in the several towns of the contracting parties, but also in the places appointed for the general meetings of the Greeks. Thus in the treaty concluded between Athens and Lacedæmon, in the tenth year of the Peloponnesian war, one of the articles stipulated, that columns with the terms of the treaty inscribed should be erected at Olympia, at Delphi, and at the Isthmus, as well as at the Acropolis in Athens, and in the Amyclæum at Sparta. (Thuc. lib. v. c. 18.) In the later league, which the bold but artful politics of Alcibiades, (Thuc. lib. v. c. 43, 44, 45, 46.) cemented between the Argians, the Eleians, and the Athenians, it was agreed in the same manner, that

the articles of the league and the oaths should be inscribed on a marble pillar; that each of the contracting parties should erect one in a place specified, in their several territories; and that a brazen pillar should be erected jointly by them all at Olympia, at the games then about to be celebrated.

† The Philian Jupiter appears to have been the god of good-fellowship among the ancients; and more particularly the patron and pattern of those humbler members of society, who were willing to be entertained at the expense of their richer neighbours. A parasite in the Epiclerus of the comic poet Diodorus characterises his divine prototype in the following manner.

I'd have you better know this trade of ours:

'Tis a profession, sirs, to ravish admiration:

Its nursing-father is the Law; its birth

Derives from heav'n. All other trades bear stamp

Of frail humanity upon them, mix'd,

I grant, with show of wisdom—but your parasite

the sight of it is to him like the sight of a long-regretted mother. Then turning to his daughters, "the worthless offspring of a miserable parent," he requests the attention of their stomachs; (which he seems to consider the seat of all their sensations,) putting it to their choice, whether they will starve or be sold. The young ladies have not much room for hesitation; and they beg with great earnestness to be sold. The choice does not surprize the parent; but another difficulty crosses him: who would be

Is sprung from Jove: and tell me, who in heaven
Is Jove's compeer? 'Tis he that under name
Of Philian enters ev'ry mansion—own it
Who will, gentle or simple, prince or artisan:
Be't room of state or poverty's mean hovel,
He stands upon no points:—the couch is spread,
The table furnish'd—on't a goodly show
Of tempting dishes: what should he ask more?
He drops into a graceful attitude,
Calls like a lord about him, gorges greedily
The daintiest dish, washes it down with wine,
Then bilks his club, and quietly walks home.
I too am piec'd with him in this respect,
And by the god my prudent course is fashion'd.
Is there a gala-day, and feast on foot,
With open door that offers invitation?
In walk I, silence for my only usher:
I fall into a chair with sweet composure,
(Why should my neighbour's peace be marr'd by noise?)
I dip my finger in whate'er's before me,
And having feasted ev'ry appetite
Up to a surfeit, I walk home with purse
Untouch'd—hath not a god done so before me?

so simple as to buy them? At length the Megarian has recourse to the following scheme, which, in allusion to the bad faith ascribed to his countrymen in their *commercial dealings, is called a Megarian device: he dresses up his daughters, with their own consent, as so many hogs; he ornaments them with hoofs and snouts and encloses them in sacks, with an injunction to grunt discreetly, and like the hogs which were sacrificed in the Mysteries. Things thus prepared, the father calls loudly for Dicæopolis, and tells him he has hogs to sell. "How fare you?" asks Dicæopolis. "We sit ever by the fire and deeply—†*think*," replies the Megarian. "And a very good thing too," replies Dicæopolis, missing (purposely perhaps) the pun, "if you have a piper to play by you at the same time. But what else are your countrymen about?" "They were deliberating in full council, when I came away, which was the best mode of exterminating our town—rope, fire, or water." "Either,"

* The system of deceit, which the Megarians carried into their traffic, the schools of Euclid and Eubulides taught them also to introduce into conversational intercourse. The three syllogisms of antiquity, well known under the names of the veiled, the bald, and the Epimenides or the liar, were originated by the latter of these two philosophers; they are explained with much vivacity in the

French Anacharsis, tom. iii. p. 424.

† This is one of those pleasant-ries by surprize which have been mentioned before. The audience expected the Megarian to say *drink*. To enjoy at one and the same time the pleasures of a cheerful fire, good wine, and a strain of music was thought by the Greeks the perfection of luxury: hence the answer of Dicæopolis.

intimates the reflecting Dicæopolis, "is effectual; they are short but certain remedies against every evil." The Megarian agrees, and Dicæopolis continues his interrogatories still at the expence of Pericles and his decree. "But how is corn?" "The gods themselves are not in more esteem with us. We bow before a grain as before a divinity: it is so scarce an article!" Salt and garlic, two other productions of Megara, were equally lost to the natives; for the Athenians, according to this person, had made themselves masters of the salt-pits, and the heads of garlic "they had turned up with little stakes, when they made their incursions into the country, like field-mice." The two conversationists then proceed to bargain for the hogs: the whole scene, by playing with the facilities of the Greek language on the natural and assumed state of the vender's daughters, is full of that equivoque which excites no other mirth but what a reader would think it necessary to apologize to his own self-respect for having indulged. It will be sufficient therefore to observe, that the little porkers grunt in very good Megarian Greek; that they devour with admirable rapidity and most obstreperous satisfaction some chick-pease and dried figs which are thrown before them, and that Dicæopolis, ravished with their congenial appetites, gives readily the price demanded for the pair; viz. a bundle of garlic, and a pound or two of salt. The bargain concludes much to the satisfaction of the father, who tells Mercury, the god

of gain, in a short address, that he should be happy to dispose of his own mother and wife upon the same terms. While Dicaëpolis retires for the garlic and salt, and the Megarian is in the midst of his self-congratulations, he is interrupted by that ubiquitous being in Athens, an informer, or sycophant. The Megarian calls loudly for Dicaëpolis, who drives away the intruder and bids his salesman *farewell*. "Alas!" says the Megarian, playing on the word, "that is a term which has long been out of fashion with us." "Then I'll take the omen to myself," says Dicaëpolis. The CHORUS conclude the scene with the following characteristic song of congratulation. It is furnished at the expence of the informers: a race whom Aristophanes justly persecutes with the most unrelenting severity. Ctesias, Prepis, and Artemon make no second appearance after this song of triumph: the rest will often be before the reader.

CHORUS.

Barter with Freedom takes her seat: wait Joy upon the union:
And health to him who hallows trade beneath their blest communion:

Scoff and taunt and biting jibe

He may cast upon the tribe,

Who inform, and take a bribe.

Tho' Ctesias enter, what's to fear?

The scoundrel will but vent a tear,

And sigh, and groan, and mutter.

Uncheated he his stalls may spread, nor lose his time and labour ;
 Uninjur'd he his frock may doff, tho' Prepis be his neighbour.

For him o'er elbow, heel, and hand,
 Cleonymus holds due command;
 And though his cloak be contraband,
 Hyperbolus his books will seal,
 Nor threaten, warrant, and appeal,
 Rejoinder and rebutter.

Room for our friend *Cratinus makes, nor crosses on his station
 That essence, powder-puff, and mere tonsorial preparation :

E'en Artemon, see, steals away,
 The rogue who deals in mi, sol, fa ;
 Our ears his rapid numbers charm ;
 But wherefore nests beneath his arm
 A guest† so foul, and dirty ?

* The Cratinus here mentioned was not the comic poet of that name, according to Brunck. He is reproached in the text with shaving his head in the effeminate mode (for Greek luxury had invented various modes of head-dress, with appropriate names to each) called *μυχας*; and with the instrument called *μαχαίρα*.

† The ancients had a coarse way of reproaching persons *not odoriferous*, by saying they kept a goat under their arm. Artemon

is taunted in the text with accommodating an animal of this description. Two bons mots of Thais and Phryne on this subject are recorded in Athenæus; but, like most other witticisms of the Greek courtesans, they are not worth repeating. Grecian delicacy must either have been very fastidious, or great provocation given to the sense of smell by the Locrians, since history has handed down to us a whole branch of them as the Ozolian, or *stinking* Locrians.

Take truce with Porson, prince of rogues, take truce with jibes and scoffing ;

And mark, Lysistratus but shews his sail within the offing :

Lysistratus, that's dipp'd in sin,

All foul without, all stain within :

*Cholargia well her scandal knows,

Who every month a starveling goes

Days more than one and † thirty.

* Cholargia was one of the wards of the tribe Acamantis. The great Pericles was a wardsman of Cholargia.

† Polybius, who has been ac-

cused of having too much vivacity for an historian, says in a similar way of the Bœotians, that they made more than thirty feast-days in the month.

ACT IV.

IN the fourth Act a Bœotian enters with a train of pipers, who had followed him from Thebes, much to his discomfort, and whose noise excites the spleen of Dicæopolis. The worthy citizen dismisses them with a hearty curse, levelling at the same time a sarcasm upon Chæris, a flute-player, who has already been before the reader.* He then turns affectionately to the new-comer, and addressing him as one "who lived upon the small loaf named Collix," (it is a

* In this treatment of the Theban musicians, Aristophanes speaks the language of the times, and displays that professional jealousy which might naturally be expected from an aspirant to public favour in a town, where every species of reputation was so warmly contended for. Till the time of Melanippides, the dithyrambic poet, (Plutarch, *De Musica*, tom. ii. p. 1141. C. ed. Frf.) i. e. till about twenty or thirty years before the performance of the *Acharnians*, the greatest harmony had subsisted between the poets and the flute-players; the latter submitting quietly to that subordinate rank, which the former assigned to them. As flute-music grew more into repute, the professors of it began to exalt themselves

in society: a schism then gradually took place between the poets, and those whose office it was to accompany the choral songs. The comic writers took revenge, by holding up their rivals to ridicule on the stage: a contemptuous expression of Alcibiades (vide Plutarch's *Life of him*) completed their disgrace: flute-music fell rapidly into disrepute: a knowledge of its principles was no longer considered as a branch of liberal education, and the practice of it, like the laborious occupation of the athlete, was stigmatised as *Theban-like*, and consequently unfit for a gentleman. *Die Erfindung der Flöte und die Bestrafung des Marsyas.* Att. Mus. B. i. H. 2.

common mode of salutation in Aristophanes to address a person by the ordinary article of his diet,) he inquires what his "little Bœotian" has brought with him. The Bœotian, in that *dialect of which the ridicule was so grateful to Athenian ears, gives a catalogue of the articles he has to dispose of. He has poultry, grasshoppers, wild-marjoram, and penny-royal; he has mats, candlewicks, ducks, jackdaws, hazle-kens, coots, couriers, and divers. "Why, you come to market driving all before you like the bird-storm."† "I bring geese, hares, foxes, moles, hedge-hogs, weasels, writing-tables, otters, Copaic‡ eels." All the sensuality of Dicæ-

* See also a fragment of Strattis. (Ath. lib. xiv. p. 621.) One of the peculiarities of this dialect, consisting of a substitution of the letter *θ* for *σ*, might rather have been expected from Athenian than Bœotian sensibility. So far however did the Thebans carry their aversion, that whole odes were composed, (*ᾠδαι ἀστυμυαί*) from which the *sigma* was carefully excluded. (Ath. lib. x. p. 448.) The flute-players, as Aristoxenus more than once affirms, (Ath. lib. xi. p. 467.) were equally hostile to a letter, whose harsh and hissing sounds so ill harmonized with musical accompaniments. The Attic tragedians, on the contrary, seem to have taken a pride in multiplying the *Σαυ κισθαλας*, as Pindar contemptuously calls it; and Euripides in particular carried

the practice so far, that Plato, the comic writer, made it a matter of congratulation to his countrymen to have been delivered from his multiplied *sigmata*. The nicer delicacy of Pericles, who practised always before a mirror, that he might see what effect the pronunciation of each letter had upon his mouth, led him carefully to avoid this ungraceful letter; and the Athenians, taught by his example, began gradually to adopt his preference of the Doric to the Ionian mode of speech. (Ausführung, viii. Att. Mus. B. i. H. 2. s. 345.)

† The wind which blew from February 28th to March 12th was called by the Athenians the ornithian, or bird-wind. *Stillingfleet's Calendar of Flora*.

‡ The "anguilla, di Bolsena"

opolis is aroused by this last intimation. He calls instantly for a gridiron and bellows; he summons his whole family about him; bids them salute this delicate morsel to which they had so long been strangers; congratulates the Comic Choruses and Morychus, a well-known epicure, on the return of this their favourite dainty;—for myself, concludes he, parodying a passage from Euripides,

Witness for me, that dead or living, still
Affection's edge shall not grow dull to thee,
Thou best of * fish, and more especially
When drest with beet.

seems to have been to the Italians what the Copaic eel was to the Greeks. Among those punished for gluttony in Dante's Purgatory, one person is pointed out,

qui purga per digiuno
L'anguille di Bolsena, e la vernaccia.—*Canto 24.*

The Sybarites, the great patrons of luxury, exempted those who fished, for eels, from all public taxes.

* Many of the old dramatic writers speak in high commenda-

Talk not to me of schools and trim academies,
Of music or sage meetings held at Pylus—
I'll hear no more of them: mere sugar'd words
Which melt as you pronounce them. Fill your cup

tion of the Copaic eel.* Eubulus, in his comedy of Ion, goes so far as to canonize it. The Athenians, it is certain, were much given to the pleasures of the table, and fish of all kinds was considered as a particular dainty. The following fragment from the Asotodidascalus of Alexis stands in the mouth of a slave; but many of more exalted rank shared, it is to be feared, in his depravity of taste.

* Philotærus in his Oenopion considers the loss of it as one of the greatest privations, to which death itself exposes us.

There are no nuptial suppers in the grave,
Nor do the dead regale on eels.

The Bœotian, who also indulges in a little* parody by calling the eel, after a line in Æschylus, "the elder of the fifty Copaic virgins," wishes to name a price for this valued article of food; but Dicæopolis will hear of none: no, says he, this I claim as the toll of the market. They then proceed to bargain for the rest of the Bœotian's ware: the vender, in preference to money, wishes for some Athenian articles in exchange, which are not to be found in Bœotia. Anchovies and earthenware are named: but to these the Bœotian objects; though of the former, that particular† sort is offered,

And pledge your neighbour in a flowing bumper.
 This sums my doctrine whole—cocker your genius—
 Feast it with high delights, and mark it be not
 Too sad—I know no pleasure but the belly;
 'Tis kin, 'tis genealogy to me:
 I own no other sire nor lady-mother.
 For virtue—'tis a cheat: your embassies—
 Mere toys: office and army sway—boy's rattles.
 They are a sound—a dream—an empty bubble—
 Our fated day is fix'd, and who may cheat it?
 Nought rests in perpetuity; nor may we
 Call aught our own, save what the belly gives
 A local habitation: for the rest—
 What's Cædrus? dust. What Pericles? a clod.
 And noble Cymon?—tut, my feet walk over him.

Atheneus, lib. viii. p. 336.

* The *επιχειρηματις*, or supper-hunters, had always at their finger-ends a set of verses adapted to every kind of eatable. Grecian history, which thought no kind of excellence too worthless to be

mentioned, has recorded one Charinus of Syracuse, as having been particularly apposite in quotations of this nature.

† Those from the port Phalera in Attica.

to which, in the opinion of the great epicure Arcestratus, all other anchovies were as *dung* in comparison. "Both," says he, "we have in abundance at home: I want something of which *we* have a scarcity, and *you* have plenty to spare." "Then the thing you want is an *informer. It is but pack-

* It has been already observed at page 76, that what is called informer by us, was by the Greeks called sycophant. The following explanation of the term is from the pen of Mr. Mitford.

"The gross vices of the Athenian government and judicature gave birth to that evil, which, with the name of sycophancy, so peculiarly infested Athens. The term originally signified information of the clandestine exportation of figs. Apparently to gratify the idle populace of the city, at the expense of the landholders, some demagogue had procured a law, forbidding the exportation of that plentiful production of the Attic soil. The absurdity of the prohibition, however, making the information particularly invidious, the term sycophant grew into use as a general appellation for all vexatious informers. Such was the encouragement which the Athenian government and judicature afforded for these, that sycophancy became a profession," (an example of this

will be seen in the comedy of the Birds,) "furnishing a livelihood for many. The sycophant courted the lower people, and was the terror and scourge of the rich. Intimation to a wealthy man that he would be denounced, as able to equip a trireme," (see the comedy of the Knights in this volume,) "or provide a dramatic entertainment, or give a supper to his ward, often sufficed to obtain money for preventing so serious an evil. But the sycophant's great engine of profit was accusation, whether true or false; though false accusation was often preferred, we are told, as generally more lucrative. The various public functions which the wealthy were not allowed to decline, magistracies, equipments of ships of war, and presidencies of choral festivals, made opportunities endless. In the expiration of office, the *euthynë*, or scrutiny, before the council, must be undergone. Accusation was then, in a manner, invited: and if any, however unfounded, was offered, person and

ing one up like some potter's clay, and you may easily carry him off." The Bœotian is much pleased with the exchange. An informer was an animal unknown in Bœotia: he can make money of so rare a monster; he will exhibit him as an ape of rare and marvellously perverse manners. "And see," says Dicæopolis, interrupting him, "here comes Nicarchus to our very hand." The Bœotian objects to his size. "He is small I own," says Dicæopolis; "but there is nothing lost in him. All is knave that is not fool." Nicarchus immediately gives tongue at sight of a Bœotian, and offers a specimen of the ridiculous charges of information which were common among the litigious Athenians. His first attack is upon the poultry. "Why sure," says the Bœotian, "you do not make war upon birds?" He next falls upon the Bœotian himself—he will denounce him—it

property were attached, and remained so till judgment was given. The sycophant was necessarily an Athenian citizen, for no other could denounce; but the evidence of strangers and slaves was admitted, and often preferred; because they might be examined by torture, which was sometimes carried to such inhuman severity, that the sufferer died under it. But however little the accusation could be supported, it would always occasion trouble and expense; and any neglect of the fas-

tidious multitude would involve danger. Bribes were necessary to procure dispatch from the officers who directed the business of the courts; an Athenian jury would be solicited for favour, or it would pronounce condemnation; and not by the accusation of Xenophon only, but by the confession of Lysias, the great advocate for democracy, we are assured that at Athens equally protection for iniquity might, and justice must be bought."—*Grec. Hist.* vol. v. p. 27.

is plain that he comes from an enemy's country—he has candlewicks and matches with him; and nothing was easier than to take advantage of a proper wind, fix a lighted match to a beetle, convey the beetle though a water-pipe, and set fire to the *dockyard: and then—What?—there would be a very brilliant illumination. “And this is your opinion?” “I bear witness to it,” says Nicarchus, using the official word. Dicæopolis immediately proceeds to tying him up. The CHORUS assist in the labour; and Dicæopolis maliciously considering him as a piece of earthenware, remarks what a hollow chinking noise the “fire-crack’d god-detested” vessel makes. “You have a vessel here for all purposes,” continues the worthy citizen, addressing his chapman;—“a whole porcelain manufactory.—Would you beat up a suit at law? he is your pounder. Are you in the dark as to who is liable to the Euthynë?† he is the candlestick

* The extreme value and importance to the Athenians of their navy, the great source and support of their revenue and power, rendered accusations of this kind probably not uncommon among that suspicious and litigious people. We find Demosthenes having recourse to it in that foul series of transactions, which made the ruin of Antiphon necessary to cover his own illegal conduct.—*Demosth. de Coronâ.*

† The *euthynë* was that investigation which all ambassadors, all persons in official situations, and those entrusted with the disbursement of the public money, had to pass, before certain officers appointed for the purpose. A reluctance to undergo the *euthynë* has been stated as one among other reasons, which induced Pericles to plunge his country into the Peloponnesian war.

to throw light upon the matter. Would you have a little mischief? no better dish than this to serve it up. Would you make your neighbours drink a little trouble? this is the cup to mix it in." The CHORUS are in fear that so frail an article may not arrive safe at its journey's end. "If 'tis tied by the heels with the head downwards," says Dicaëopolis, "it will travel safe enough—" "True; and you may throw an informer where you please,—he will stick to any thing," adds the self-corrected CHORUS. After a little more pleasantry of this kind, Nicarchus, much against his will, is trussed up and laid on the shoulders of the Bœotian's slave. "It is a worthless article you carry," concludes Dicaëopolis; "but you may make some money of your burthen, for an informer must be a curious show to strangers."

SCENE III.

A servant of Lamachus enters with a request that Dicaëopolis will allow his master to purchase a few thrushes and Copaic eels to celebrate the Feast of Pitchers. Who may this Lamachus be, inquires Dicaëopolis, affecting ignorance, and what may be the nature of him? He is, replies the servant, in the language of the tragic dramatists,
The terrible man—patient of labour—
Who bears the Gorgon on his shield, and shakes
From's bushy helm a triple crested blackness.

Dic. Then he's no purchaser; e'en tho' his shield
 Should be the price. Let him unto the *salt fish—
 There let him shake his triple crest at will:
 If he but make disturbance here, we have
 Our officers at hand. I'll in meantime,
 And take my purchase with me. (*Enters the house, singing.*)
On blackbirds and on thrushes wings
Exultingly he rode, &c.

CHORUS.

Ne'er did our city see (and sight need not
 Be costive of belief) so wise a man
 As this: there's nought but he may purchase him,
 Such vantage hath this happy treaty brought:—
 What's fit for household service;—what sets off
 A supper to advantage, giving edge
 To sated appetite, he dares buy all.
 Nay, and his spirits keep an equal footing
 With his rich fortune; for observe yon †feathers,

* Salt fish constituted the principal food of the Attic soldiers and sailors. Prodigious quantities were, for this reason, as well as to satisfy the general partiality for them in Athens, imported from the *Euxine*. At the present time, salted olives, under the Hellenic name, *columbades*, form the constant food

of the Levantine sailors; and a late traveller in Greece, the Hon. F. Douglas, declares them, from experience, to be a most substantial and nutritious food.—*Essay on the Modern and Ancient Greeks*, p. 138.

† It was usual for the vainer citizens of Athens, when they gave

Sure token that who haunts within those doors
 Makes himself revelry with dainty fare .
 And wine :—and all this cheer and luck to him
 Came voluntary !—Now for WAB,—I do
 Henceforth forbid him clean my house.—That wassailer !
 That drunken, rude companion ! never shall he
 Chaunt strain of sweet *Harmodius at my table.

an entertainment, to hang up the feathers of hens or other birds before the doors, that passers-by might know what was going on within. The "ostentatious man" in Theophrastus adorns the forehead of the bull, which he has sacrificed, with garlands, and hangs it up before his door.

* The reader of history needs not to be reminded, that it was the poniards of Harmodius and his friend Aristogeiton which put an end to that government of the Peisistratidæ in Athens, to which a passionate love of liberty rather than the vices of those princes gave the name of a tyranny. It was at the grand festival of the Panathenæa, when every citizen had the privilege of bearing arms, that the deed was effected. The two friends concealed their weapons in branches of myrtle; and the gratitude of the Athenians, or rather the policy of the Alcmaeon-

ids, whose interest it was to hold up the Peisistratidæ to hatred, and to elevate the revenge of a private quarrel to the dignity of tyrannicide, (see *Mit.* v. ii. p. 104.) eternalized the circumstance in songs which it was usual to sing at convivial entertainments. One of these, preserved by Athenæus, is well known to scholars: an elegant version of it is given in Bland's Anthology; but it seems as susceptible of prose translation as of verse. As mention is made of it more than once in the ensuing work, the reader perhaps will not be displeased with a literal translation of this celebrated fragment.

I will carry my sword, covered with sprigs of myrtle, as did Harmodius and Aristogeiton, when they slew the tyrant, and gave to Athens an equality of laws.

Thou art not dead, O beloved Harmodius: in the Islands of the Blessed, where live Achilles the

There was no blessing but our pleasure tasted;
 When, lo! this reveller came rudely on us,—
 Batt'ring—upsetting—overwhelming—slaughtering.
 Yet wanted he nor invitation sweet,
 Nor pleasant speech :—thus did we oft discourse him—
 “ Pray take a seat—spare not the bottle—friend,
 We pledge you in a bumper.” What did he,
 A ranting, storming, unforbearing fellow?—
 Breath o' my body! even fire our *props,
 And rudely broach the liquor from our trees.

The CHORUS having thus addressed the god of battles, the citizen invokes a deity of a different order. If contrast be a source of humour, the present comedy is not sparing of it.

Dic. Maid, whate'er thy appellation,
 TRUCE, or RECONCILIATION,
 Thee, I mean, whose fitmost place is
 With fair Venus and the Graces,

swift-footed, and the bold son of Tydeus, there too they say that you exist.

I will carry my sword, covered with leaves of myrtle, as did Harmodius and Aristogeiton, when they slew the tyrant Hipparchus at the feast of the Panathenæa.

O beloved Aristogeiton, thou art covered with glory : O Harmodius, dearest of men, thy fame is immortal : for you slew the tyrant, and you gave to Athens an equality of laws.—*Athen.* lib. xv. p. 695. fol.

* The props or sticks by which the vines were supported.

(With them was thy earliest dwelling);—
Lovely charmer! all excelling,
Did I see thee, nor discover
Gifts that might have won a lover
In that forehead op'ning fair,
In that boon and buxom air?
But the dull delusion's over—
Call me instant from above
Him, the winged child of love;
Him that's drawn by *painter's hand
Weaving roses in a band:
He the holy priest shall be
(Worthy thy fair self and me)
To bind fast the chains, which never
May our fates and fortunes sever.—
Perchance you think my heart is cold,
And mark my hairs, and say I'm old.
Old I own me, yet kind fate
Triple blessings bid me wait,
If my lot be join'd with thine—
To plant in lengthen'd ranks the vine,
To graft the fig-tree's tender shoots,
To pluck the vineyard's purpling fruits;—

* The poet alludes to a celebrated picture of Zeuxis in the temple of Venus.

And* olive-trees in many a row
 Around our farm shall circling grow,
 Fragrant oil and juice supplying
 To anoint our limbs at will,
 When yon †moon but lately dying
 Once more begins her lamp to fill.

SCENE IV.

A herald enters and proclaims that the Feast of ‡Pitchers is about to commence; each man, says the holy func-

* The soil of Attica was particularly favourable to the cultivation of the olive; and religion, which in Greece was ever made subservient to the causes of agriculture and commerce, watched with particular vigilance over this favoured and valuable tree. (See the curious speech of Lysias de sacrâ oleâ.) M. de Pauw, who writes with great animation, when describing the peculiar attachment of the Athenians to a country life, says: *Ce terrain, arrosé par le Céphise, l'Ilisse, et l'Éridan, étoit singulièrement favorable à la végétation des oliviers. Ils y formoient une forêt immense, qui au temps de la floraison paroissoit de loin comme couverte d'un voile blanc,*

soutenu par des rameaux d'une verdure très-foncée, où se réfugioient différens essaims d'oiseaux, qu'on voyoit arriver au retour du printemps de l'Asie dans la Grèce.—tom. i. p. 54.

† The new moon, or commencement of the month, was always a day of festivity among the Greeks; the sacrifice offered to Hecate furnishing a plentiful repast to the poorer citizens. From the present passage and one in Theophrastus, it should seem that the meaner citizens of Athens were in the habit of anointing and shaving only once in the month.

‡ The Feast of Pitchers was on the second day of the festival called Anthesteria. It was so named,

tionary, will empty his pitcher by sound of trumpet, and he who does it first shall receive the prize of victory—a huge leathern bag or “**Ctesiphon*.” This intimation rouses the energies of the old man; he applies vigorously to his *cuisine* and makes preparations for celebrating the festival. The science which he displays in boiling, roasting, spitting, and unspitting, gains a short but emphatic tribute of applause from the now friendly Chorus; and the professional diction in which his science is exhibited, seems no less to command their admiration. The preparations indeed for a feast were not to be passed over too cursorily before an audience, whose writers have handed down to us the names of† Me-

because every man drank out of his own pitcher, in commemoration of the following accident. Orestes, having slain his mother, fled to Athens before he had undergone the customary purification for murder. The Athenians were at the time busy in celebrating the feast of Bacchus, surnamed Lenæus, because he had the care of wine presses. Demophoon, the reigning king, received Orestes kindly, but to prevent the contamination which might adhere to the company by drinking with a polluted person, and that Orestes might not be offended by being obliged to drink alone, he ordered that every man should have a distinct vessel

of wine and drink out of his own cup. In this festival it was the custom to drink plentifully; and the *longest liver*, as Archbishop Potter terms it, was rewarded with a crown of leaves and a vessel of wine.—*Potter's Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 367.

* Ctesiphon is ridiculed as if, from his obesity, he could be a substitute for the leathern football, which constituted a part of the amusements at the Feast of Pitchers.

† These persons were writers upon the art of cookery, as well as practitioners. The cook, as a dramatic character, belongs to the Middle and New Comedy of the

thæcus, Numenius, Hegemon, Tyndaricus, &c. with those of Plato, Xenophon and Thucydides.

SCENE V.

Two more characters are here introduced, a countryman and a paranymp, or a person who, in the nuptials of the ancients, acted the same part by the bridegroom which the bridemaïd did by the lady. The countryman has heard of the peace which Dicæopolis has established for himself, and begs a small portion of this blessed gift—"a trifle, a five-years measurement will serve his purpose; he had lost his oxen—had hurt his eyes with weeping for them—would Dicæopolis touch them with the ointment of peace, that salve for every sore?" Dicæopolis protests that he is no physician, and sends him to Pittalus, a celebrated practitioner and hired servant of the public. The countryman is still importunate; "one drop—no matter if it be ever so little." Dicæopolis attends only to his cookery. The paranymp, who is come with a similar request, smooths the way by presenting a *portion of the nuptial entertainment. He is the messenger of a new made husband, and wishes one

Greeks; and the gravity with which his art is treated, though it grows tiresome by repetition, is often calculated to give considerable amusement.

* At a Grecian entertainment every guest had the privilege of selecting a favourite dish, and sending it to his own or friend's house.

drop of peace to protect him from serving in the wars. Dicaëpolis is not to be persuaded. The bridemaid then comes forward and begs to speak with him aside. She comes with a petition from the new made bride. Dicaëpolis inclines more graciously to her request; he calls for his allegorical "TRUCES," and makes a present of one of them to the petitioning bride.—"She is a woman," says he, "and 'tis not fit her sex should know the ills of war." A portion of the blessed liquor of peace is also dropped into a perfume-box for the use of the bridegroom; and as the ancients were very nice in their use of ointments, applying different* articles to different parts of the body, particular directions are given how this new unction is to be applied.

* Athenæus, lib. xv. p. 689. In that formidable catalogue of artisans, who, according to Plautus, (Aulularia, Act. iii. sc. 5.) necessarily entered into the establishment of a Grecian lady of fashion, the suppliers of perfumery occupy a foremost place. The article itself bore a high price at Athens; but this did not hinder voluptuaries from using it very profusely. The following mode, adopted by a man of pleasure, almost excuses its extravagance by its ingenuity.

Nor fell

His perfumes from a box of alabaster;
That were too trite a fancy, and had savour'd
O' the elder time—but ever and anon
He slipp'd four doves, whose wings were saturate
With scents, all different in kind—each bird
Bearing its own appropriate sweets:—these doves,
Wheeling in circles round, let fall upon us
A show'r of sweet perfumery, drenching, bathing
Both clothes and furniture—and lordlings all—
I deprecate your envy, when I add,
That on myself fell floods of violet odours.

SCENE VI.

These petitioners are followed by two messengers: one enters with an exclamation that couples labour, battle, and the Lamachi together, and announces to that vainglorious soldier, that some Bœotian marauders had made an incursion into the country, and that the *strategi*, or commanding generals, insisted upon his taking "his crests and cohorts" immediately, to guard the passes, in spite of the inclemency of the weather. Lamachus curses the **strategi*—"more conspicuous for their numbers than their merits"—and his own fate; Dicæopolis laughs heartily at both. The second messenger addresses himself to Dicæopolis and announces that supper is ready.

To supper, sir; and let your pitcher

And †basket bear you company: no stop—

* The Athenian armies were under the command of ten general officers, one from each tribe. They were all invested with equal power, but in expeditions of concern and moment, each enjoyed the supreme command by days. Lest in controverted matters an equality of voices should retard their proceedings, an eleventh person, called the Polemarch, was sometimes joined

in commission with them. The authority of the *strategi* seems gradually to have declined, till, about the time of Demosthenes, they did little more than preside at the public festivals. The "*signori della guerra*" of the Florentine Republic had precisely the same authorities as the Athenian *strategi*, and were the same in number.

† It has been already explained

No tarrying: Bacchus' high priest demands
 Your instant presence, and the guests are waiting.
 All is prepared—the table and the couch—
 With due appurtenance of clothes and cushions.
 Chaplets and dainties of all kinds abound:
 Here rich perfumes are seen—there cakes and cates
 Of every fashion, cakes of honey, cakes
 Of *sesamus, and cakes of unground corn:

that at the Grecian entertainments the guests themselves brought with them the greatest part of the dishes. "Du temps d'Aristophane c'étoient les convives qui apportoit la plus grande partie de mêts avec eux; et celui qui donnoit le repas ne fournissoit que, le local, les ornemens et les hors-d'œuvre, et faisoit venir des courtisanes."—*La Bruyère*, t. iii. p. 44.

* In the Grecian confectionary, the sesamus came most properly under the class of Choria, or those cakes which were made of milk and honey. Among an innumerable quantity of *plucenta*, which were served up at Grecian tables, and which Ægimius, Hegesippus, and Chrysippus have thought it worth their while to record, may be mentioned, the *Enchytus*, a receipt for making which has been handed down by Cato, and which seems to have resembled the mo-

dern omelet—the *Ames*, to which Lynceus of Samos, when comparing the dainties of Rhodes with those of Athens, proposes the Echinus as a rival, but without committing himself too decidedly on the point—the *Amphiphon*, which was offered to Diana, and round whose edges were little lighted torches, the reason for which has been given by Philochorus,—the *Creium*, which among the Argives was a present from the bride to the bridegroom; the friends of the parties were invited to partake of it, and it was set before them accompanied with honey—the *Cribanas*, (τῶ σχηματὶ μεσσηνικῶς) which was used in the Spartan ladies' entertainments, and carried round, when the nuptial hymn was about to commence—the *Charisius*, so called from the peculiar pleasure which it gave to the person eating it—the *Pelanus*, which Cecrops,

What more—a troop of dancing women fair,
 And minstrels who may chaunt us sweet Harmodius.
 Haste, sir, I beg you, to the banquet.

This news begets a groan from Lamachus, and Dicæopolis reproaches him with his shield and Gorgon ornaments; then turning to his servant, bids him prepare for supper. A sort of Amœbæan dialogue then follows between Lamachus and Dicæopolis, which has more humour in the original from proximity of sound in many of the words than an English translation can possibly give. The attempt, however, deserves to be made, as it is perhaps the earliest specimen on record of a species of humour, which succeeding dramatists have been so fond of copying. The commands of Lamachus are those of a man preparing for the hardships of a campaign: the responses of Dicæopolis are those of a person making ready for a convivial entertainment. A few lines have been omitted which did not contribute to the effect of the piece.

Lam. Boy, bring the *sack that holds our coarse campfare. (*Speaking to a servant within.*)

much wiser, says Pausanias, than Lycaon, ordered to be sacrificed to the gods in the place of animals—the *Tagenites*, which, from its name, should resemble the modern

pancake — the *Pyramus*, which was given in convivial parties to the person who continued longest awake, &c. &c.—*Ath.* l. xiv.

* The repasts of the Florentine.

Dic. My *cista, boy—and mark—the trust asks care...

(*Speaking in the same manner.*)

Lam. Bring pungent onions, salt, and pounded thyme.

Dic. (*contemptuously*) Onions I hate, and leeks I deem
a crime.

Lam. Add salt-fish, lad, in leaves well wrapp'd and dry.

Dic. Leaves† too for me, but such as serve to fry.

Lam. Two pinions from my spreading helmet bring.

(*they are brought*)

Dic. A well-fledg'd thrush for me, and ringdove's wing.

(*they are brought*)

Lam. (*admiring*) White is the ostrich, and its pen a plume.

Dic. (*admiring*) Yellow the thrush, but oh! what rich
perfume!

soldier were not more sumptuous than those of the Athenian; but they were carried in conveyances much more magnificent. The baskets which held the cheeses, chestnuts, and dried service-apples (the Florentine military fare) were covered with very rich cloths.

—— con panni d'un color
segnati,
Chi facean di lontan mostra pom-
posa

Di salmeria superba e preziosa.

Secc. Rap. Canto v. stanza 36.

* Various specimens of the

cista, which seems to have answered in some degree the purposes of the modern cellaret, may be seen in the valuable publication for which artists and scholars are indebted to the pencil of Thomas Hope, Esq. *Costume of the Ancients*, vol. ii. pl. 203.

† The original is *thrium*. The thrium appears to have been an olio of different ingredients inclosed in fig-leaves and then roasted. The scholiast mentions three receipts for making a thrium.

Lam. These arms might bid you taunting jibes forbear.

Dic. These dainties, sir, those side-long oglings spare.

Lam. (*taking a crest from its case*) Fate sits and smiles
upon this triple crest—

Curse on the worms who make thereof a nest!

Dic. (*holding a dish of hare*) Health sucks the odours
which these lev'rets deal—

Ah, foolish I, who first made daintier meal!

Lam. (*to Dic.*) To me this language?

Dic. (*ironically*) It were much too bold:
This trusty lad and I large wager hold.

What sayst? (*to his servant.*) Shall Lamachus hold
stakes, and say;—

Locust* or thrush, which eats the best to-day?

Lam. Mere insolence this speech.

Dic. The contest's done.

(*To his servant*) He holds a locust best—your wa-
ger's won.

Lam. (*to his servant*) Unsheathe the spear for joust and
tilting fit.

Dic. We too can fence—(*to his servant*) charge, home,
boy, with this spit.

Lam. Bring forth the orbit of my Gorgon shield.

Dic. I with a cheese-cake's orbit take the field.

* The Greeks sometimes eat locusts; but it was reckoned a very coarse kind of food, and is therefore properly assigned here to a person about to encounter the hardships of a campaign.

Lam. Oil on my buckler:—(*oil is poured on his shield*)
 what discern we here? (*Pretending to see the*
image of Dicaopolis.)

A wither'd forehead and grey locks appear!

I see* a man that shuns the battle's strife,

Fixt at the bar and pleading for his life.

Dic. Some honey, boy, (*pours it on a sweet cake*)—I
 mark a rev'rend face: (*meaning himself*)

Soft are the lines and all the features, grace;—

Courteous and frank, peace-loving, friendly, civil—

But giving empty braggarts to the devil.

Lam. (*enraged*) My breast-plate there—the warrior's love-
 liest sight.

Dic. My pitcher, boy—I drink and scorn the fight.

Lam. (*breast-plate is brought*) Thus am I arm'd against
 the fiercest foe.

Dic. (*pitcher is brought*) No fence like this—as truest
 toppers know.

Lam. My bed-clothes, boy—and tie my shield thereto—
 I'll bear the sack,—(*aside*) 'Twill scarce suffice for
 two.

Dic. My cellaret, boy—load it rich with cates—
 I'll dress anon—for sure the banquet waits.

* In the dispute which takes place between Teucer and Menelaus in the Ajax Flagellifer of Sophocles, the same curious species of sarcasm is used.

Lam. On, boy, and let this shield your shoulders press—
Snow falls—hail beats—bleak winter's in our mess.
Dic. Raise high the dainties—guard your burthen, boy—
Good cheer is with us, and each shout speaks joy.

CHORUS.

Compliments and gratulation
Who may spare on such occasion?
Hence now each by your vocation: (*speaking
to Dicæopolis and Lamachus*)
Differing widely in the main,
Each must serve his own campaign.

Flask and flow'rs for him (*pointing to Dicæo-
polis*) are waiting;
Cold for you (*to Lamachus*) and battle's baiting:
Love and Beauty *him* are sating:
You must be content to press
The bed of unblest singleness.

Exeunt Dicæopolis and Lamachus.

The CHORUS having thus briefly contrasted the situation of the two parties, breaks into divisions, each of which indulges in a separate strain, at the expense of one Antimachus, a poet and historian of the times. Besides the sins of writing bad poetry and dull histories, a crime much greater in the eyes of the CHORUS attached itself, it appears,

to his character; in his office of *choregus*, or leader of the Chorus, (of which more will be said in the succeeding play,) he had incurred displeasure by being less sumptuous in his entertainments than persons who served that expensive* office usually were. There is a buoyancy, a mau-
 vaise plaisanterie, a something between impudence and wit, which often carries the Athenian poet over ground where an English translator almost fears to set foot.

SEMI-CHORUS.

I'm a man of few words
 Nor long speeches I make;
 So—at once—may the devil
 Antimachus take :—
 —That scurvy contriver,—
 —That son of† saliva,—

* It is generally represented as if the office of choregus had been a voluntary one. Wolf, correcting Phavorinus on this point, observes that among other privileges conferred at Athens, not the least valuable was that termed *ἀντάλμα των χορηγιων*; and he justly concludes, that there would have been no occasion for exemption in a matter which rested solely upon the will of the citizens themselves.

† When the Greeks mentioned

a person's name, they frequently added that of his father to prevent mistakes; the poet, in his peculiar manner, calls Antimachus the son of Psacas. Psacas in Greek signifies *dew*, and this patronymic is bestowed upon Antimachus, because in conversation his saliva was apt to escape him, the consequences of which fell upon the bystanders. To know how far republican independence could carry a contempt for the decencies of life, the reader

Who late when he led
 Our troop, sent them to bed,
 Without waste to his brewing,
 His meat or his meal,
 Or any way doing
 The thing that's genteel.—
 But Vengeance may yet
 Settle with him her debt.—
 Some day to my wish,
 On a table or dish,
 There shall lie a sleeve-fish, }
 Hot from cauldron or pot,
 Fragrant—soft—hissing hot—
 Even there as it lies
 Tempting hand, mouth and eyes,
 And himself all in haste
 Of the banquet to taste,
 While it's yet in his twitch,
 There shall enter a bitch,
 Who making a dip
 Bears it off in her lip;
 And ere men can find her,
 Ten miles are behind* her.

should consult the nineteenth of
 those characters which the in-
 imitable Theophrastus has pour-
 trayed for us.

* A reference to Grecian habits
 and inclinations will show that
 this was a more adequate revenge
 than might at first be thought.

SEMI-CHORUS.

This mode of acquittal
 I grant is not bad;
 But I have a little
 Appendix to add.
 Imprimis a fever
 Be on this deceiver;
 Then as night brings him back
 From a ride on his hack;
 As homeward he hies him
 May a *cut-purse surprize him,
 Who assails him and plies him
 With missile and stick
 Like a mere lunatic.
 My hero o'erthrown
 Casts about for a stone:
 But his hand is at fault,
 And the palm it secures,
 What except pigeon's dung
 Is the best of manures.

Fish constituted the principal food of the Athenians; in fact food and fish were synonymous terms among them. As religion among the Greeks was little more than a personification of the feelings and appetites, it is no wonder that among their other deities there is found a "Jupiter the Fish-eater."

* Mendicity and domestic robbery began first to appear in Athens soon after the commencement of the Peloponnesian war; both most probably induced by that fatal policy of Pericles, which led him to crowd the whole population of Attica within the walls of a confined capital.

But for science no matter:—
 He grasps well his batter,
 Takes aim, but the dark
 Throws him wide of his mark:
 Orestes escapes,
 And Cratinus instead
 On his ledger writes—Debtor
 For a wound in the head.*

With this malediction, which needs all the indulgence due to the personality and homeliness of the Old Comedy, closes the Fourth Act. There is a pleasure in looking back to what we have lost, as well as to what we have gained by the progress of society; and from this specimen, many readers will perhaps think, that Attic wit may come rather under the first than the second class.

THE Fifth Act is extremely short: for the school of Aristophanes had no intricacies of plot to unravel, no niceties of

* There is more humour in the malice with which the Chorus see their friend Antimachus through this course of disasters than at first appears. Cratinus, according to the scholiast, is not the poet, but a testy, passionate person of the same name, who was not likely to mourn an affront without visiting it pretty severely upon the person offering it. Orestes was a notorious footpad of those days: he is mentioned again in the comedy of the Birds.

character to develope; and the progress of the piece by no means implied a necessary progress in the interest. The Act is opened by a servant of Lamachus, who calls loudly at his master's door for hot water, linen rags, cere-cloth, dirty wool and surgeons' bandages. This domestic relates in an incoherent manner, that has something of Rabelais' style of humour in it,—how his master in crossing a ditch had staked himself and dislocated his ankle—how he had further dashed his head against a stone and broken it to pieces—how he had started the Gorgon device from his shield—how the terrible crest had been beaten upon the rock; and, finally, that Lamachus, supposing himself to be in his last agonies, had resigned his soul, in the language of the tragedians,

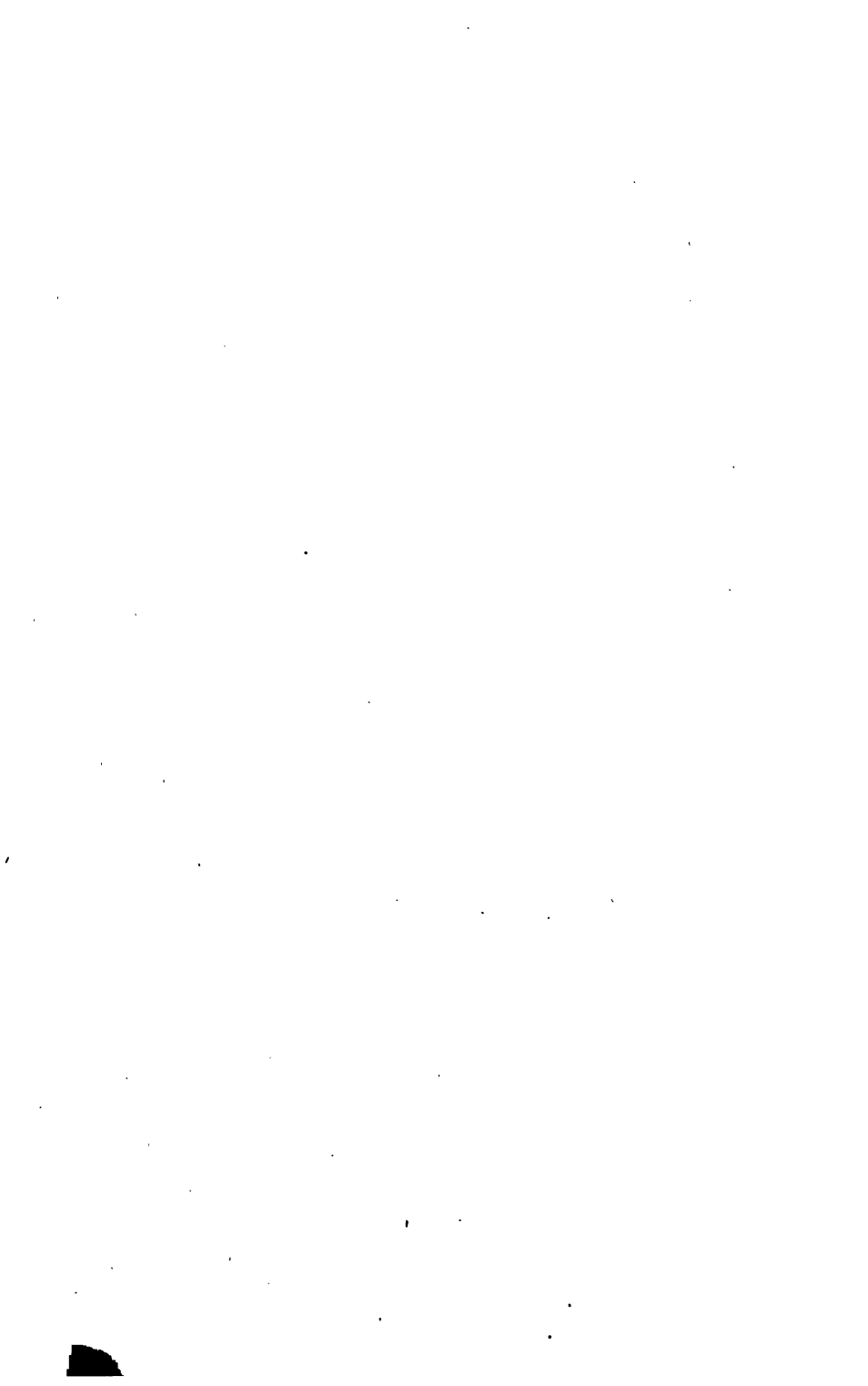
Adieu, thou sun and fields of golden light;
 For the last time I drink thy radiance bright,
 And sink to sleep and everlasting night.

}

Having uttered these words, continues the servant, he fell into a water-pipe, rose again, came up with certain fugitives, and with his spear bravely pushed the robbers. Lamachus then makes his appearance, supported between two of his servants, wounded, miserable, and galled with the thoughts of the ridicule which his figure will excite in Dicæopolis. The worthy citizen (if he does not rather merit an additional syllable to his name) returns to the stage supported by two of the dancing women, who had formed part of the High

Priest's entertainment; and another short intellectual sparring takes place between the two opponents, evincing admirably the powers of the Greek language, but much more to the credit of the worthy citizen's wit than his morals:—the Greeks, however, as Gozzi observes of the Italians, were fond of seeing dramatic characters in the most “robust situations,” and Aristophanes was not the man to balk their expectations. Lamachus is finally carried to the surgeon, while Dicæopolis claims the leathern bag, as having first emptied his pitcher. The notes of victory (Tenella Calinicos) are sung over him by the friendly CHORUS, and a mock procession, like those of Molière in the *Malade Imaginaire* and *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, seems to have concluded the piece.

END OF THE ACHARNIANS.



THE KNIGHTS;

OR

THE DEMAGOGUES.



THE KNIGHTS;

OR

*THE DEMAGOGUES.**

THE Comedy of the Knights carries us two years forwarder into that most interesting period of Grecian history, the Peloponnesian war. In this Comedy, as in a glass, may be seen the effects of that fatal policy, pursued by Pericles at the commencement of the war, and to which the reader's attention has already more than once been directed. Never had corruption made more rapid progress in a state than under the influence of that unfortunate measure, which had broken the simple habits of rustic life, and converted the whole body of Athenians into inhabitants of a town. The professed object of this singular composition is the overthrow of that powerful demagogue, whom the author had

* The former of these is the title given in the Didascalizæ, and is that by which the piece is most generally known; but it was a title very likely to mislead the English reader, and the first impressions of a reader are those which are least easily eradicated. The celebrated

Wieland, who has translated this and other plays of Aristophanes into his native tongue, and whose extensive erudition and extreme impartiality make him a most invaluable assistant to a person engaged in a similar labour, uniformly calls it the Demagogues.

professed in his *Acharnians* (Act II.) that it was his intention at some future day "to cut into shoe-leather;" and his assistants on the occasion are the very persons, for whose service the exploit was to take place,—the rich proprietors, who among the Athenians constituted the class of Horsemen or Knights.*

For this purpose Athens is here represented as a house: Demus (a personification of the whole Athenian people) is the master of it, Nicias and Demosthenes, names too familiar to the reader of history to need explanation, are his slaves, and Cleon is his confidential servant and slave-driver. The levelling disposition of the Athenians could not have been presented with a more agreeable picture. If the *dramatis personæ* are few, the plot of the piece is still more meagre; it consists merely of a series of humiliating pictures of Cleon, and a succession of proofs to Demus, that this favourite servant is wholly unworthy of the trust and confidence reposed in him. The manners are strictly confined to Athens and might almost be thought to belong to a people, who imagined with the Indian that his own little valley comprehended the whole world; and that the sun rose on one side of it, only to set again on the other.

* In the Athenian state, the Knights ranked next to those of the highest quality and fortune. They were not a very numerous body; consisting of such only as possessed estates equal to the furnishing a horse at the rider's own expense; and this in the rocky and barren country of Attica was by no means inconsiderable.

Of all the comedies of Aristophanes, scarcely one can be said to exceed the *Knights* in value; not so much as a specimen of the dramatic art, as an historical document, giving a strong, full, and faithful picture of the most singular people that ever existed. We are here admitted literally into the interior of Attica;—into the very house of the allegorical Demus; and certainly the master of the habitation is such as we should wish to contemplate at a very respectful distance. Irritable, jealous and suspicious—eaten up with oracles and a prey to the most miserable superstition—fickle in his feelings and inconstant in his pursuits—a greedy devourer of his own praises, and on some occasions, it must be confessed, equally patient of abuse—with a curious mixture of sense and imbecility, of acuteness and blindness, of insolence and servility, if the Demus of Aristophanes sometimes reminds us of the John Bull of our own country, it is certainly only for the purpose of making us dwell with more satisfaction upon that representative of our national character. The eccentric and mirthful muse of Aristophanes throws a gaiety over the most unpromising subject; but, cruel and capricious—alternately tyrants and slaves,—at once sharpeners and dupes—devoted to the lowest of their appetites—gluttonous and intemperate—idle amid all their activity, and sensual amid privation and poverty, the life of the common Athenians cannot but fill us with contempt and disgust:—without object and without plan, without real

activity or true enjoyment, it exhibits a picture at once ridiculous, loathsome, and fearful, and shews the extreme corruption to which a state may be rapidly conducted by the united influence of republicanism and demagogues.*

Whatever may be thought of the line of conduct by which Pericles paved the way to the possession of supreme power in Athens, and whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the motives which hurried him into the Peloponnesian war, this play affords sufficient evidence that he alone was able to have conducted it with honour, and that none but he could be safely entrusted with that fulness of power, which, in the hands of the leading †minister of Athens, put at his disposal the Athenian commonwealth with all its appurtenances, "its revenues," as the contemporary historians

* That a state, constituted as Athens is represented in this play, could have existed for a week, seems hardly possible; but Wieland has justly observed, that the earlier events of the French revolution are a convincing proof that the author might have written all that he has, without giving reason to imagine that he has drawn merely a fancy-picture. In that singular revolution, says the same writer, the Demus of Aristophanes became a real person, and the parts of the Paphlagonian and the

Sausage-vender were played with an easiness and suppleness which secure the comic writer from all suspicion of having overstepped the boundaries of what is possible in human nature.

† The office, which conferred this extensive power, was that of *ραπισ*, or the public treasurer. It was generally given for a term of five years; but if the holder of it conducted himself to the satisfaction of the people, he was generally reinvested with it.

Describe it, " its armées, fleets, islands, the sea, friendships and alliances with kings and various potentates, and influence that commanded several Grecian states, and many barbarous nations." By the death of this accomplished politician, which happened at a time singularly unfortunate for his country, this rich prize had again become a subject for competition; and the two parties, which prevailed more or less in every Grecian city, and which his all-commanding talents had kept in repose, had already filled Athens with all those conflicting passions by which human nature is agitated. At the head of the aristocratic interest appeared Nicias, the son of Niceratus; a man rich, amiable and generous; with considerable talents, both military and political, but unequal to the times and to the particular people among whom he was born; while Democracy, after veering some time between Lysicles and Eucrates, the one, according to Aristophanes, a seller of tow, and the other a dealer in cattle, had at last taken repose by showering the whole tide of her affections upon the noisy, turbulent and worthless Cleon. The son of a tanner, and himself bred to the trade; without those generous feelings which seem inherent in high birth; and without that regard for character, which it is the purpose of education to inspire, Cleon possessed those corporeal powers which, in the eyes of a mob, often supply the place of both:— with a bulky body, a voice potent even beyond the extreme

extent of *value attached to such a qualification among the Greeks, with a most republican indifference to all exterior decorations of person, and a face bearing on it the marks of vulgar intemperance, Nature herself seems to have formed Cleon for a demagogue. His interior qualifications were just what his exterior promised; he being, as Mr. Mitford observes, of extraordinary impudence and little courage; as slack in the field as he was forward and noisy in the assembly, and as base in practice as he was corrupt in principle. That such a man should ever have stood in the situation of head of a party seems to us almost incredible: but he possessed one redeeming qualification in an eminent degree; and among a nation which pardoned every thing to the pleasure of indulging its ears,† the coarse but ready

* Among the Greeks, where civil business was transacted before large numbers, and where in war little was communicated by signals, a loud voice was a very important endowment. The name of Stentor has even grown into a proverb. The service which Thrasybulus of Styra rendered to Alcibiades by the loudness of his voice on a very trying occasion, is recorded by Plutarch in his life of that extraordinary man. See also Herod. l. iv. c. 141. 7. c. 117. Cleon appears to have possessed lungs of astonishing strength. Aristopha-

nes frequently compares his voice with the Cycloborus, one of those torrents which precipitated themselves with an overpowering noise from the rocks in the neighbourhood of Athens.

† The spirit of a man, says the Xerxes of Herodotus, (and the strong contrasts in that monarch's character seem to shew the people for whom the historian had most adapted it,) resides in his ears; when he hears what is agreeable to him, pleasure spreads itself over every part of his body; when the contrary happens, he is filled

*eloquence of Cleon, exerted in those ways which were most calculated to please an Athenian audience,—in boasts of his own integrity, and accusations† of all the respectable men of rank,—this formed a splendid addition to his character, which threw into the shade all his other defects.

To qualifications such as these, the amiable diffidence of Nicias formed but a very weak opposition; and Demosthenes, with little powers of oratory, and even in his own profession more fitted to act upon the suggestions of others than to devise any thing original of his own, was ill calculated to supply the deficiencies of his colleague. All opposition therefore in the General Assembly to the low and petulant Cleon seems gradually to have declined, and graver men saw with grief and indignation that the ample power, which had once been vested in the hands of a Miltiades, a

with pain and exacerbation of mind. Lib. vii. c. 39.

* The history of the Italian states offers proofs no less remarkable than the Grecian, of the powers, which eloquence possesses over the susceptible minds of the inhabitants of warm climates. The eloquence of a poor fisherman (Mas Agnello) could quell a sedition; the oratory of an innkeeper's son (Colas de Rienzo) could restore for a time the fallen dignities of Rome. The preaching of a single

monk (Jacob des Bussolari) baffled the whole power of Milan; and while the plain of Paquara witnessed twelve nations as the audience of Jean de Vicence; John of Bohemia, without the power of being able to read, saw thrones and sceptres offered to him in abundance as the reward of his powers of persuasion. *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes*, tomes ii. v. vi.

† See the speech of Diodotus, Thuc. lib. iii.

Themistocles, an Aristides, and a Cymon, was now concentrating fast in the worthless and ignoble Cleon. It was in this exigency that a poet stepped forward to support their declining cause, and to effect upon the stage what had been without avail attempted in the Assembly. That personal hatred was one of the motives which led to the bold and dangerous attempt, there can be no doubt: but that Aristophanes was in the pay of Nicias's party, or that he was instigated by mercenary views, as Wieland suggests, there seems no good ground for affirming. He had evidently formed a high idea of the profession to which he had given himself: he had devoted much time and industry to the development of those extraordinary talents with which he was endowed; and the keen sensibility, with which, it is evident, amid all his apparent thoughtlessness and extravagance, that he felt the triumph of success and the mortification of failure, shews that to be the first comic poet of his day was the great and ruling object of his ambition. Where a warm and ardent love of fame is felt, the meaner passions are seldom found to exist. That Aristophanes reckoned upon the assistance of the aristocratic party is evident from his own declaration; but his best security, he knew, rested in the display of those talents, which had already gained him much attention, and which by their extraordinary mixture of elegance and coarseness, of wit and buffoonery, of apparent simplicity and real acumen, seemed peculiarly adapted to

catch the tastes and fascinate the minds of his countrymen. The attack itself, the manner in which it was conducted, and the consequences which resulted from it, will all demand a few words.

Accustomed as we are in England to see the most exalted characters subjected with impunity to the lash of the pencil and the press, it may be thought that the danger of attacking a demagogue like Cleon, especially when the privileged licence of the Old Comedy is considered, was by no means very appalling. An incident mentioned in the piece itself will shew that this was far from being the case. It was the privilege of the Old Comedy to attack persons not merely by their names, but by means of masks to give an exact representation of the person satirized. It was thus that Lamachus and Euripides had been served up to the public ridicule in the comedy of the Acharnians; it was thus that Nicias and Demosthenes were no doubt exhibited in the present play; and in the same manner a faithful portraiture was afterwards given of the son of Sophroniscus. In drawing the character of Demus, the author had already ventured upon what few others would have dared to attempt; for though the sovereign multitude encouraged personal satire, it was always understood that their own sacred person was to be excepted. Satire against the people collectively, says Xenophon,* the people do not al-

* De Rep. Athen. c. 2. s. 18.

low. What the courage of Aristophanes, however, had dared to describe, the artists did not want courage to pourtray, nor the actors to represent; and a Demus was brought before the audience, in such costume, no doubt, and with such features as the fruitful mind of the original creator of the character might suggest. But though the mob itself, it was thought, might thus be treated with impunity, the idol of the mob created a more reverential terror. No artist would venture to give a representation of Cleon's face, and no actor would expose himself to the resentment of the all-powerful demagogue by playing him off before that audience, who were at once his servant and his master. The same person therefore who had delineated the character in his closet, was obliged himself to sustain it on the stage; and the lees of wine rubbed upon his face served to convey some idea of the flushed and bloated countenance which the mask-maker had not dared to represent.

The poet, in the character of Cleon, and his dramatic opponent, (through the medium of whom the ridicule was to be administered,) once face to face upon the stage, a combat of the most extraordinary kind ensued; and those who have been accustomed to hear of Athenian urbanity and politeness will recoil with astonishment, perhaps, from scenes, which were received with enthusiasm by the countrymen and fellow-citizens of Plato, Xenophon and Thucydides. Whatever were the acuteness, ingenuity and

natural taste of an Athenian audience, (and that they possessed all these in a wonderful degree cannot be doubted,) we want no other evidence than this play to prove that they had yet to learn that art, at once so difficult and so sublime, as an acute* observer has termed it, by which men are rendered mutually satisfied with each other and with themselves; and that the bienséance, which leads to the belief that a man respects himself, and the politeness which leads to the belief that he respects others, were qualities either unknown or little practised among the lower Athenians. Never very scrupulous in his ideas, nor in the language in which they are clothed, Aristophanes seems to consider an attack upon Cleon as an apology for overstepping all bounds of decorum: to assail him was, in his own words, to stir up the effluvia of a tan-yard, and by the very act of rousing him the whole atmosphere becomes tainted and poisoned. Cleon appears to have been in his imagination as the centre of a circle, into which all that society exhibits of the mean and the ridiculous, all that folly contains of the weak and the imbecile, and all that vice displays of the odious and disgusting, was, as a matter of course, to be drawn. That good humour, which, in spite of the opposite opinion generally entertained of him, formed, I think, a conspicuous part of the character of Aristophanes, displays itself here

* De Pauw.

but rarely:—he had set his all upon a cast, and the danger he was running evidently sits heavy upon his mind. His CHORUS, who are generally to his plays what the female faces have been observed to be to the pieces of Hogarth, a means of keeping the acrimonious feelings within the limits of legitimately pleasurable sensation, here assume a ferocity of character—the poet has written their parts with gall, and armed their hands with a dagger. The German critics, whose feelings are as correct as their learning is profound, have observed the difference between the Knights of Aristophanes and his other plays. It is a struggle for life and death, says Wieland; it is a true dramatic philippic, says Schlegel.

In attacking Cleon so continually upon the point where he seemed least assailable, viz. the affair at Pylus, the poet has shewn that deep knowledge of the people collectively, which forms the most considerable feature in his literary character. He knew that the exploit performed at Pylus, however it might command the acclamations of the mob at first, was, in fact, a line of demarcation between them and their favourite. For though with a little examination, (a trouble which the giddy citizens of Athens were not likely to give themselves,) Cleon's share in this achievement would have been found to amount to nothing, yet, taken in a general view, it conferred a sort of respectability upon his character; and respect is the last feeling which the mob wish to

be demanded of them by the candidate for their favour. To be in full possession of their affections, he must be as vile and worthless as themselves. It is for this reason that Cleon's achievement is so continually served up to the audience. Of two consequences one was likely to result. If no accession to Cleon's popularity had been gained by this boasted exploit, to treat the exploit itself with ridicule was one of the surest means of preventing an increase of favour with the mob: if, on the contrary, an opinion of Cleon's capacity had gained ground, it was politic to nauseate the audience with a continual recitation of the only event upon which any real notion of his capacity could be grounded. The peasant who signed the vote for the banishment of Aristides, had no other reason for it but that he was tired of hearing him continually styled the Just.

The consequences which resulted from this singular exhibition may be told in a few words; but those few words supply ample materials for thought: the piece was applauded in the most enthusiastic manner, the satire on the sovereign multitude was forgiven, the poet was crowned with the prize of victory, and—Cleon remained in as great favour as ever. Nothing can testify more amply to Athenian love of wit, to Athenian penetration: but while much must be conceded to the good humour which could so patiently endure the detail of its faults; that good humour itself is a proof how fixed was the determination of the au-

dience to abide in all the errors of their national character: for those who laugh at the exposure of their faults are least likely ever to amend them.

The *Knights*, even as a drama, has always held a very high rank, and not undeservedly. The character of Demus is an immortal proof of rich *invention, discrimination, and acuteness; and the sausage-seller is the very triumph of vulgarity. That bold and spirited morality which displays itself in all the works of Aristophanes, not unaccompanied, it must be owned, with the most perverse depravity, is nowhere more conspicuous than in his *Knights*. Where the author is bad, he leaves all competition at a distance; but where he is good, the most delicate taste can hardly wish for a finer banquet. The fullness of this enjoyment, however, must be left to those who can read him in the original Greek: to fight the battles of the poet in any other language than his own is like sending the steed of the great Cid to battle with the lifeless† body of his master upon his back: if any victory be gained, the success must be set down to the credit of the reader's imagination. As a piece of mere

* After the exhibition of the *Knights*, an allegorical Demus seems to have become a favourite subject with the painters and sculptors of Athens. (See Meursius de Peir. c. 4. Pausan, l. i. c. 3.) That of Parrhasius was

particularly distinguished, as displaying in an admirable manner the various inconsistencies of the Athenian character. Plin. lib. xxiv. § 36.

† Romance of the Cid, 68. Litt. du Midi, t. iii.

language, indeed, the *Knights* is perhaps without parallel; the figures in the piece may be those of Teniers and Ostade, but their colouring in the original has all the richness of *Reubens*. The diction of *Aristophanes* is to his ideas what the best accompaniments of *Mozart* are to his worst melodies; it resembles the liberality of a man whose present of a silver coin is wrapped up in a note of many times its value; like **Algebraic language*, it may be said to be rather the creation than the conveyance of thought. Even the low terms, of which so unsparing a use is made in this comedy, had a charm perhaps for Athenian ears, of which we are not susceptible. The Italians, who in the peculiar cast of their gaiety and vivacity, approach very nearly to the Athenians, are enthusiastically attached to the low Florentine; they find in it an expressible grace, and many of their critics to this day think† nothing written with purity which is not formed upon the language of the lower orders of Florence of the fourteenth century. It is at once consolatory and mortifying to the translator of *Aristophanes* to make these

* *Edinburgh Review*, XXIV. *Buëe, sur les Quantités Imaginaires*.

† The *Malmantile racquistato* of *Lorenzo Lippi*, and the *Torrahione desolato* of *Paolo Minucci*, (the former of which has been illustrated by more commentators

than any Italian poem except the *Divina Commedia*) are said to owe most of that high celebrity, which they enjoy among the cultivators of the Tuscan language, to the great portion which they contain of this favourite dialect. *Sismondi, Littérature du Midi*, tom. ii.

observations: consoling, because the impossibility of transplanting the beauties of the original diminishes the temerity of attempting to convey an idea of some of the more common passages; and mortifying, because he feels the injustice done to his author by thus presenting a succession of coarse pictures, unredeemed by that spirit and those graces of language, with which they are clothed in the original; but powerful as the English language is, it may be doubted whether the strongest hand could raise it to such a height as to meet the original of the Knights.

An event in Grecian history, to which allusion has already been made, forms so prominent a part in the ensuing comedy, that without some explanation of it, the piece itself will scarcely be intelligible: a mere outline must suffice here; the reader who wishes for more intelligence will find his curiosity amply gratified in the pages of Mr. Mitford. A squadron of the Athenians, at the instigation and under the direction of Demosthenes, had constructed a small fort at Pylus, on the Messenian coast, with a view of securing a point of attack upon the territories of their opponents the Lacedæmonians. The latter naturally became alarmed, and made speedy preparations for dispossessing their antagonists of this advantageous post. Many contests took place between the contending parties to effect their different purposes. The peculiar nature of the harbour at Pylus, and the island of Sphacteria, which faced it, seemed,

at length, to put a few hundreds of the Spartans, who had been landed on the island, into the power of their enemies; and it requires but little acquaintance with the history, organization, and peculiar institutions of that singular people, to know that the loss of a few hundred Spartans was equivalent to the loss of a whole army. Alarmed at an event, which was likely to bring disgrace on many of their principal families, the heads of their government made instant overtures to the Athenians for peace. Their offers were rejected by the General Assembly at the instigation of Cleon: but when the prospect of success which had been held out at Pylus began to wear a less flattering aspect, the Athenians became alarmed in their turn for their own fort and the fleet which supported it; and it seemed doubtful whether the party of Spartans, which a sanguine imagination had put into their hands, might not yet escape them. The sequel of the story will be best related in the words of the historian, to whom reference has already been made. "Public indignation was rising fast against Cleon, as the evil counsellor of the commonwealth and author of the evils felt or apprehended. He found it necessary, for obviating popular clamour and disgust, to exert himself in the Assembly, and in a very extraordinary train of circumstances that followed, his impudence and his fortune (if in the want of another we may use that term) wonderfully favoured him. He began by boldly insisting 'that the circumstances of their fleet and

army at Pylus were not so adverse as they were reported; this assertion called forward the officers who brought the intelligence: they desired 'that if they were thought unworthy of belief, proper persons might be sent to examine into the state of things.' The Assembly assented to this request, and Cleon himself was named among those to be commissioned for the purpose. Pressed by this proposal, which he was aware would not answer his end, and anxious any how to throw the weight of the business upon others, he seems, in the moment, to have lost his guard. 'It were idle waste of time,' he said, 'to send commissioners to inquire, when they should rather send generals to execute. If those who directed the military affairs of the Commonwealth were men, it would be easy with the force which they could at all times command, to subdue the little band of Spartans in Sphacteria; were he in that station he would engage to effect it.' The unenterprising Nicias, at this time commander-in-chief, being thus called upon, in his anxiety to obviate crimination, miserably betrayed the dignity of his high office. 'As far as depended upon him,' he said, 'Cleon might take what force he pleased, and make the attempt.' Cleon immediately accepted the offer, thinking it not seriously made; but Nicias persisting, Cleon would have retracted, saying 'Nicias, not he, was general of the Republic.' Nicias, however, observing that his proposal had not displeased the Assembly, declared solemnly

before the Assembly that for the business of Pylus he waved his right to command. The more then Cleon appeared still anxious to withdraw, the more the people, as the historian observes, in the usual temper of mobs, insisted that he should make his words good, with clamour requiring that Nicias should resign the command, and that Cleon should take it. Thus appointed general, Cleon, though alarmed with the danger, was elated with the extravagant honour; and in the next Assembly held on the business, he resumed his arrogant manner: ‘ He did not fear the Lacedæmonians, he said, and for the expedition to Pylus, he would desire no Athenian forces: he would only take the Lemnian and Imbrian heavy-armed, at that time in Attica, with the middle-armed of CEnus and four hundred bowmen of the allies; and with that small addition to the armament then at Pylus, he would, within twenty days, either bring the Lacedæmonians in Sphacteria prisoners to Athens, or put them to the sword upon the spot.’ Amid the many very serious considerations involved with the business, this pompous boast excited a general laugh in the Assembly: yet even the graver men, says the historian, were upon the whole pleased with the event, upon considering that of two good things one must result; either an important advantage must be gained over the Lacedæmonians, or, what they rather expected, they should be finally delivered from the importunity of Cleon. It soon however appeared, that though for

a man, like Cleon, unversed in military command, the undertaking was rash, and the bragging promise abundantly ridiculous, yet the business was not so desperate as it was in the moment generally imagined; and in fact the folly of the Athenian people, in committing such a trust to such a man, far exceeded that of the man himself, whose impudence seldom carried him beyond the controul of his cunning."—vol. iii. pp. 250—253. Those who wish to pursue the story will find their curiosity amply gratified by the pages of the historian, from whom the preceding account is taken. It will be sufficient to observe here, that by the exertion of a little prudence, and by some fortunate* coincidences, Cleon completely fulfilled his engagement, and actually entered the Peiræus within twenty days after he had quitted it.

* Demosthenes had been principally deterred from attempting a landing upon the island, from the circumstance of its being very thickly wooded: his former campaigns in Ætolia having sufficiently apprised him of the use which might be made of such an advan-

tage. An accidental fire, which happened just before the arrival of Cleon, destroyed most of the trees on the island, and removed the main obstacle to a successful attack upon the occupiers of it. Thuc. lib. iv. c. 30.





DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DEMUS, *an old Citizen of Athens, and in whom the Athenian People are typified.*

DEMOSTHENES,
NICIAS,
 } *Slaves of DEMUS.*

The PAPHLAGONIAN, (**CLEON**) *Steward to DEMUS.*

SAUSAGE-SELLER, (*afterwards* **AGORACRITUS**.)

CHORUS OF KNIGHTS.

SCENE—*Space before DEMUS's House.*

THE KNIGHTS;

OR

THE DEMAGOGUES.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

DEMOSTHENES. NICIAS.

THE two illustrious generals, whose names stand at the head of the scene, enter the stage, dressed in their proper costume of slaves, and complain bitterly of the hardships they suffer since the introduction of an execrable Paphlagonian into the house of their common master, Demus. After a ridiculous concert of lamentation, derived from the elegies of *Olympus, the celebrated musician, the two slaves

* Olympus, the Phrygian, lived in the time of Midas, before the Trojan war, yet his compositions or *μουσικα*, as well the music as the verses, were extant even in Plutarch's days. Plato bestows the highest encomiums upon his com-

positions, as well as those of Marsyas, calling them most divine. Gray's Notes on Arist. Plato, Minos. It was the delight of the comic poets, from causes which have been already explained, to throw ridicule upon the musicians.

begin to consider that they have power to quit this mansion, the scene of so much misery to them. Neither, however, ventures to suggest, in direct terms, the proposal of so heinous a scheme. The *timid character of Nicias is properly discriminated here, as well as that of the blunt soldier Demosthenes, who was more fitted for executing the plans of others than devising any of his own. A proposal, which required art and a certain equivocal in the expression, does not pass without a blow at Euripides, whose dangerous sentiments the poet delighted to expose. It is Nicias who wishes to cover his own want of confidence by clothing his diction in that tragedian's "neat and clever" manner; but Demosthenes will not hear of it: "if you love me, if you have any regard, any bowels of compassion, spare me the mortification of a †potherb." But though averse to any dealing with the great tragedian, Demosthenes is still urgent upon his fellow-slave to exert his invention, and enable them to chant the song of deliverance (*apocinum*) from their ser-

* This part of Nicias's character has been well caught and portrayed in the *Lettres Athéniennes* of Crébillon; a work, which gives a very interesting picture of the politics of this period, but mixt up with so much exceptionable matter as scarcely to pay the trouble of consulting it. An acute and good-humoured view of the whole play,

as a dramatic work, may be found in the *English Athenian Letters*, written by the members of a noble family, who have distinguished themselves equally in literature and politics.

† This blow at the parentage of Euripides has been already explained.

vitude. Nicias at last falls upon a method for expressing a word, which seems to cost the parties as much difficulty in the avowal as the confession which is so delicately wrung from Phædra in the beautiful tragedy of Hippolytus. The colder inflexions of our *language will not allow us to show the facility and pleasantry with which Demosthenes is made finally to slip into the criminal word: and the purity of our manners fortunately forbids all explanation of the action, by which the dialogue was made more piquant to the dissolute and worthless audience. The word thus ingeniously compounded, implied a resolution to desert their old master and take refuge with another; and desertion, uncountenanced as yet by the example of the unprincipled Alcibiades, was held in strong and merited abhorrence. While the general therefore admits the gratefulness of the proposal, he suggests that

* The separable preposition of the original, but the inferiority of the German language has enabled the translation is still very perceptible. Wieland to come something near

Nicias. So sprich denn—*laufen wir*—heraus damit!

Demos. Gut! also—*lauffen wir*—

Nicias. Nun häng'an "*lauffen wir*"

Das wort "*davon*"—

Demos. Davon.

Nicias. Vortrefflich! nun

Sprich erst ganz langsam, langsam, "*lauffen wir*"

Dann immer häufiger und schneller das *davon*—

Du weisst ja was ich meyne?—

Demos. Laufen—laufen wir

Davon, davon, davon.

their skins may suffer, if they venture to put it into execution. Nicias then, consistently with those religious feelings which made part of his character, proposes that they should betake themselves as suppliants to the statue of some god. "Statue!" says the rough soldier, "and of some god! why, prithee man, dost thou believe that there are such beings as *gods?" "I †do," replies Nicias. "Your reasons?" "The sufferings I bear, and the little justice with which they are put upon me." The general, no logician, yields implicitly to this argument, and has no other resource to offer but that of laying their case before the spectators: Nicias assents, but, with his usual distrust, begs the audience to give some token first whether the subject was agreeable. A clapping of hands most probably expressed the approbation of the audience, and the task of the narrative

* The question here put into the mouth of Demosthenes was probably congenial with that soldier's sentiments. After making all allowances for dramatic licence and costume, the question of Wieland will occur to every person, who reflects upon the charges which the writer afterwards brought against Socrates: Und eine solche frage durfte der Dichter seinem Demosthenes auf öffentlichem schauplass ungestraft in den mund legen, und das in eben der stadt, wo Sokrates

in der folge den Giftbecher trinken musste, weil er beschuldigt wurde, dass er die Götter der Athener nicht für Götter halte?

† The piety of Nicias appears to have excited the scoffs of his hardier countrymen: it yet remained for adversity to shew to what sublimity this feeling could raise a mind naturally feeble and despondent. History presents nothing grander to us than the addresses of Nicias to his soldiers after the reverses in Sicily.

falls upon Demosthenes—probably in compliment to the actor who performed the part,—it paints ‘the sovereign people’ with admirable *force and humour.

With reverence to your worships, ’tis our fate
To have a testy, cross-grain’d, bilious, sour
Old fellow for our master; one much giv’n
To a †bean-diet; somewhat hard of hearing:
Demus his name, sirs, of the parish ‡Pnyx here.

* Plato had very probably his eye upon this picture of Aristophanes, in that curious allegorical description which he puts into the mouth of his great master, when pressed to give his reasons why philosophers are not more frequently seen directing the higher departments of state. See his Republic, v. ii. p. 15. Massey.

† In giving their suffrages, the Athenian dicasts, or judges, made use of sea-shells, or pebbles, or *beans*. The latter was the more common and the more modern practice. Hence the allusion in the text.

‡ Of the PNYX, that scene of so many historical recollections, some account has already been given in the preceding play. As the General Assemblies were usually held

on the Pnyx hill, it is very properly made the parish of the allegorical Demus. The fondness of the Athenians for these adjuncts, derived from their tribe or ward, has also been noticed in the *Acharnians*; a curious proof of its known efficacy upon them occurs in the funeral oration ascribed to Demosthenes, as delivered after the fatal battle of Chæronea. The speech, where so many topics were to be avoided and so many to be touched with a delicate hand, artfully concludes with a catalogue of the wards of Attica, and a separate panegyric upon the heroes, the supposed founders of them. One powerful source of this feeling must have originated in a custom mentioned by the French Anacharsis. Par une institution admira-

Some three weeks back or so, this lord of ours
 Brought home a lusty slave from Paphlagonia,
 Fresh from the tan-yard, tight and yare, and with
 As nimble fingers and as foul a mouth
 As ever yet paid tribute to the gallows.
 This tanner-Paphlagonian (for the fellow
 Wanted not penetration) bow'd and scrap'd,
 And fawn'd and wagg'd his ears and tail, dog-fashion;
 And thus soon slipp'd into the old man's graces.
 Occasional douceurs of leather-parings,
 With speeches to this tune, made all his own.
 " Good sir, the court is up,—you've judg'd one cause,
 'Tis time to take the bath; allow me, sir,—
 This cake is excellent—pray sup this broth—
 This soup will not offend you, tho' cropfull—
 You love an obolus; pray take these *three—
 Honor me, sir, with your commands for supper."
 Sad times meanwhile for us!—with prying looks,
 Round comes my man of hides, and if he finds us
 Cooking a little something for our master,

ble, ceux d'une tribu, d'un canton, sont enrôlés dans la même cohorte, dans le même escadron; ils marchent, ils combattent à côté de leurs parents, de leurs amis, de leurs voisins, de leurs rivaux. Quel soldat oserait commettre une lâcheté

en présence de témoins si redoutables? Voyage d'Anach. tom. ii. p. 214.

* Every person who attended the courts of law, or the General Assembly, received three obols for his labour.

Incontinently lays his paw upon it,
 And modestly in his own name presents it!
 It was but t'other day these hands had mixt
 A Spartan pudding for him; there—at *Pylus:
 Slily and craftily the knave stole on me,
 Ravish'd the feast and to my master bore it.
 Then none but he, forsooth, must wait at table:
 (We dare not come in sight) but there he stands
 All supper-time, and with a leathern fly-flap
 Whisks off the †advocates; anon the knave

* It has been explained very largely in the preface to this play, what this allusion tends to.

† The advocates, or public orators, performed so important a part in the commonwealth of Athens, that the reader cannot have some account of them submitted to him too soon. They were ten in number, and were elected by lots, to plead public causes in the Senate and the General Assembly. Indeed the principal business of those two meetings, though it was free to every member to deliver his sentiments in them, was conducted by the public orators. For every cause in which they were retained, they received a *drachm* (7*d.* or 8*d.*) out of the public exchequer. They generally made trial of their powers first in the courts of justice: when

practice had confirmed their talents, they entered upon a nobler career, that of enlightening the senate and guiding the people. This was a task of peculiar delicacy and the highest importance. No man, therefore, was admitted to the office of a public orator under the age of forty years; nor then till after a strict examination, in which the points most insisted on were—valour in war, piety to parents, prudence in the management of affairs, frugality and temperance. There were two or three laws by which any malversation in this most important office was guarded against. Corruption and venality, in spite of these provisions, prevailed among these men; and their cunning and their eloquence enabled them to evade the

Chants out his *oracles, and, when he sees
 The old man plung'd in mysteries to the ears,
 And scar'd from his few senses, marks his time,
 And enters on his tricks. False accusations
 Now come in troops; and at their heels the whip.
 Meanwhile the rascal shuffles in among us,
 And begs of one,—browbeats another,—cheats
 A third, and frightens all. “ My honest friends,
 These cords cut deep, you'll find it—I say nothing,—
 Judge you between your purses and your backs;
 I could, perhaps”—We take the gentle hint,
 And give him all: if not, the old man's foot
 Plays such a tune upon our hinder parts,
 That flogging is a jest to't, a mere flea-bite—
 Wherefore, (*turning to Nicias*) befits it that we think what
 course
 To take, or where to look for help.

Nic.

No course

So good as that I just advanced you:—flight—
 Immediate flight.

punishments they amply deserved; one of them, named Aristophon, could boast that no less than seventy-five accusations had been brought against him, and that he had triumphantly repelled all of them.

* Oracular responses and pre-

dictions, always abounding in Greece, seem to have been circulated in unusual numbers towards the commencement of the Peloponnesian war. Thucydides, lib. ii, c. 8. The oracles in the text are the versified oracles (*χρησμοί*): the prose oracles were called *λογία*.

Dem. Marry, but how avoid
The Paphlagonian? he hath ubiquity
As 'twere about him: one leg rests on Pylus,
The other takes firm footing in th' Assembly:
With either hand the varlet grasps Ætolia!
And for his mind—it hath fit habitation
In *Clopidæ:—how shun a man so various?

Nic. 'Twere better then to give our cares the slip,
And end our sorrows and our lives at once:
One only thought remains, to die as most
Befits brave men.

Dem. How best may that be done?

Nic. Nought better than a draught of bullock's blood:
It was the dose that gave †Themistocles
A grave: who dies like him must needs die bravely.

Dem. (contemptuously) A draught of bullock's blood!—
a draught of pure

* In this colossal picture, Aristophanes follows his usual method of punning upon actual or fabricated names of places. The province Ætolia is selected because derived from a Greek word, which signifies *to beg*; and Clopidæ, in like manner, because it was at once an Attic borough, and implied the act of *stealing*. Boccaccio is fond

of fabricating fictitious names of countries in the same manner: see among others the exquisite tales of Frate Cipolla (La sesta Giornata. Nov. 10.) and Maestro Simone (l'ottava Gior. Nov. 9.)

† The poet follows a popular tradition, current in Athens, in ascribing the death of Themistocles to a draught of bullock's blood.

And genuine *wine might serve the turn much better.
Nought genders thoughts so brilliant as a flask.

Nic. A flask! thy soul is ever in thy cups:
What thoughts can habit in a toper's brain?

Dem. Harkye, thou trifling, bubbling water-drinker,
Who darest speak treason thus against good liquor!
Resolve me—speak—What stirs the †wit most nimbly?
What makes the purse feel heaviest, or gives
Most life to bus'ness?—wine! What masters all
Disputes?—a merry cup! What gives the spirits
Their briskest flow?—good liquor! What most sets
The soul afloat in love and friendly benefits?—
A mantling bowl!—hand me a pitcher then:—
Quick, quick, nay quick! I'll bathe my very mind

* At the Greek festivals a large cup, called the cup of Good Genius, and full of *unmixed* wine, was carried round the tables, which all the guests were accustomed to *taste*. For the origin of the custom, see *Athen. lib. xv. p. 675*. Demosthenes, an experienced drinker, was no friend to that dilution of wine which the custom was intended to commemorate.

† The poet, it is to be believed, speaks his own sentiments here, as well as those of Demosthenes. Aristophanes is said, like Æschylus,

to have composed many of his plays under the influence of wine. In Plato's celebrated banquet (which is any thing but a feast of sages) the wine circulates very freely; and Aristophanes and, I blush to say it, Socrates, are left drinking together till day-light. The reader will perhaps smile to see Tasso bringing forward the same teacher of wisdom as an excuse for a little intemperance. See *Black's Life of that unfortunate poet, vol. ii. p. 21*.

And soul therein, and then see who can hit

Upon a trim device.

Nic. A-lack a-day!

What will that drunkenness of thine engender! (*Goes in doors.*)

Dem. Much good, believe me: quick, and bring the wine then.

I'll lay me down,—let but the generous fumes
Once mount into my head, and they will gender
Such dainty little schemes—such tit-bit thoughts—
Such trim devices!—

SCENE II.

DEMOSTHENES. NICIAS *returning with Wine.*

Nic. Sing we jubilate;

I have purloin'd the wine and 'scap'd observance.

Dem. How fares the Paphlagonian, lad? deliver me.

Nic. The rogue hath made of confiscation-sales

A sorry meal, and fill'd his skin with liquor.

Now stretch'd at full upon a heap of hides

The sorcerer sleeps sound.

Dem. Then pour me out

A cup of wine—no stint—a bumper, look ye,

And let the echo smack her lips in unison.

Nic. (pours out wine.) Now make libation to the Better
Genius—

If the name of *Pramnian suit him more—to him
Be made the offering.

Dem. To the Better Genius! (*Drinks, and
seems to meditate.*)

A happy inspiration comes across me.

Thine be the credit of this bright invention! (*Looking at
his pitcher with an affectation of devotion.*)

Quick, (*to Nicias*) quick; and while the Paphlagonian sleeps,
Bring forth those oracles he hoards within.

* Pramnian wine was not in great repute among the Greeks: it was neither luscious nor thick, two qualities which the ancients seem to have very much regarded in wine. We have the testimony of Aristophanes (*Ath. lib. i. p. 30.*) that harsh poets and rough wine, like the Pramnian, were equally repugnant to the tastes of the Athenians. The poet, with dramatic propriety, has given it to the slaves in the text.

† The Athenian taste for oracles and predictions is best learnt by a perusal of Herodotus. Those ascribed to the Sybil, Musæus, and other inspired persons of the fabulous and heroic times seem to

have been in great request. A still more particular credit was ascribed to those which bore on them the name of Bacis, a Boeotian, who was supposed to have received the gift of prophecy from the Nymphs, whose temple stood in the older times on Mount Cithæron. There appear to have been individuals or families at Athens, who possessing large collections of oracles ascribed to this Bacis, thought themselves masters of a great treasure, and thus became the prey of more cunning persons, who pretended to decypher these mysteries, which were enveloped in strange and enigmatical characters. That Cleon was not with-

Nic. Is this the scheme the Better Genius prompts?
 I fear me much that your divinity
 Will lose his name, and only cross your ends. (*Enters the house.*)

Dem. Meantime I put this pitcher to my mouth,
 That I may wet my drought-parch'd mind and hit
 Upon some neat device. (*Drinks.*)

Nic. (*returning.*) The rogue sleeps soundly,
 Or I had not come off so clean: here is
 The oracle. 'Tis that he prizes most;
 Hoarding with care, as if 'twere somewhat sacred.

Dem. Thou art a clever fellow; reach it here—
 My eyes must take account of this; and, friend,
 Put speed into your hand and fill a cup.
 I'll see what stuff these oracles are made of.
 (*Reads*) Anan! some liquor, quick.

out belief in predictions of this kind seems reasonable to conclude from this and the following scene: and it is the more likely as neither in extraction, education, nor modes of thinking, was he at all elevated above the lowest of the people. Wieland, *Die Demagogen des Aristofanes*, s. 13. These prophecies of Bacis are not to be confounded, says M. de Pauw, tom. ii. p. 206. with those contained in the mys-

terious volume called the Testament, over which such a veil of impenetrable secrecy was thrown that no part of it has transpired to gratify the curiosity of modern times. Dinarchus (the only author among the ancients who mentions this prophetic book) accuses Demosthenes of having failed in respect to this mysterious volume, on which, according to him, the fate of Athens was suspended.

Nic. 'Tis here. How runs
The oracle?

Dem. (*drinks and reads.*) More liquor.

Nic. Call you that

The wording on't?

Dem. (*reading.*) O *Bacis!

Nic. Why, what now?

Dem. (*reading.*) Wine, wine, more wine.

Nic. (*pouring out wine.*) This Bacis was no flincher.

Dem. (*reading.*) So, so : thou varlet of a Paphlagonian!
'Twas this bred such distrust in thee, and taught
To hoard these prophecies.

Nic. Say you?

Dem. I say

Here is a prophecy, which tells the time
And manner of this fellow's death.

Nic. Out with it.

Dem. (*reading.*) The words are clear enough : first says
my oracle—

There shall arise within our state a †lint-seller,
And to his hands the state shall be committed.

* It is after recording an oracle of Bacis, that Herodotus makes his well known declaration, that he should never afterwards dare to question the authority of oracles

himself, nor submit to such doubts in others. Urania, c. 77.

† The whole of the dialogue here is a bitter satire upon the deterioration of the Athenian democracy

Nic. One seller note we:—good—proceed,—what follows?

Dem. (reading.) Him shall a sheep-seller succeed.

Nic. A brace

Of sellers! good—What shall befall this worthy?

Dem. (reading.) 'Tis fixt that he bear sway till one arise
More wicked than himself—that moment seals him:

Then comes the Paphlagonian,—the hide-seller,—

The man of claws, whose voice outroars *Cycloberus.

Nic. The man of sheep then falls beneath the lord
Of hides!

Dem. Even so:—thus runs the oracle.

Nic. Another and another still succeeds,
And all are *sellers*!—sure the race must be
Extinct!—

Dem. One yet is left, whose craft may stir
Your wonder.

Nic. What his name?

since the death of Pericles; whose successors in administration had been a lint-seller, Eucrates, a sheep-seller, Lysicles, and a leather-seller, Cleon. It is almost unnecessary to add, that the language of satire is not to be construed too literally; and that the same extension, perhaps, is to be allowed here as in the language applied by

Juvenal to the father of Demosthenes, who instead of being a mere blacksmith, was the proprietor of a large establishment for the manufacture of swords, carried on by a numerous body of those unfortunate slaves, who abounded so much in every Grecian state.

* A river of Attica.

Dem.

Wouldst learn?

Nic.

Aye, marry.

Dem. I give it to thee then:—(*with emphasis*) the man
that ruins

The Paphlagonian is—a *sausage-seller.

Nic. You jest. A sausage-seller!—'tis a craft
Indeed! and where may such a man be found?

Dem. The task remains with us to search him out.

Nic. Why yonder see, he moves into the forum. (*Saw-
sage-vender is seen at a distance.*)

The hand of providence is sure in this!

Dem. Hither, thou happiest of sausage-sellers!—
I give you hail!—this way, dearest of men!—
Mount up, thou saviour of our town and us
Thy humble servants.

SCENE III.

SAUSAGE-VENDER, DEMOSTHENES, NICIAS.

Saus. Prithee now, what wouldst thou
With me?

Dem. This way, this way: list, friend, and learn,
The happy and the blessed man you are.

Nic. First rid him of his chopping-block: then pour

* The satire here is coarse, but put Cleon in the most contempti-
bitter: the whole turn of the co- ble light possible.
medy, as will easily be seen, is to

Dem. Of all these thou shalt be the lord
 And sovereign—the pnyx, the ports, the forum,—
 Not one but waits thy ruling nod. The senate
 Thy feet shall trample on: the generals
 Shall fall like chips before thee: lord of stocks
 And sovereign of dungeons, thou shalt lock,
 And bind—nay, further, (*lowering his voice*) in the Hall shalt
 have—

A *well-spread bed,—nor want companion in it.

Saus. All this for me?

Dem. Aye, and much more, believe me—
 But mount thy block, good friend, and cast thy eyes
 On yonder †isles—dost see them?

* A pleasantry by surprise, directed to the coarser appetites of the person in the text. It was usual with the Athenians to grant those citizens, whose services, talents, or virtues, had ennobled their country, an honourable provision for life in the Prytaneum, or hall of public entertainments. The poet appears to be providing a similar daily banquet for his sausage dealer, but by a single word he changes the sense expected and expresses, what I have been obliged to substitute a whole line for, and miss the play of words besides. These difficulties occur in almost every ten lines of Aristophanes.

† Almost all the islands in the

Ægean sea, as well as the numerous Grecian cities of Asia Minor, of the Hellespont and of Thrace, were tributary subjects of the Athenian people: they were not allowed, says Mr. Mitford, to possess ships of war, but were dependent upon Athens for protection, and liable to every kind and degree of controul from that imperial state. The following extract from Isocrates will shew in what manner this haughty people could indulge in all the pride and ostentation of tyranny. The passage is thus translated by the historian, whom I have just quoted. “So diligent were the Athenians to discover how they might most earn the de-

Saus.

Yes.

Dem.

Nay, but

The marts, the merchantmen—

Saus.

I mark them all.

Dem. O thou art Fortune's very favourite!

The child of happiness!—your right eye, sir,

On Caria,—your left upon Chalcedon.*

Saus. And call you this the top of happiness—

To have my eyes distorted?—cry your mercy.

Dem. Nay, you mistake—a whisper in your ear—

All these are so much money in your purse—

For thou wilt be—or there's no faith, be sure,

In oracles—a most prodigious man!

Saus. Go to, you canting varlet, am not I

A sausage vender?—how shall greatness then

Sit on a man of my profession?

Dem.

Tut!—

testation of mankind, that by a decree they directed the tribute-money to be exhibited at the Dionysian festival, on the stage of the theatre, divided into talents; thus making parade before the allies, numbers of whom would be present, of the property wrested from them to pay that very mercenary force by which they were held in so degrading a subjection; and setting the other Greeks, of whom

also many would be present, upon reckoning what orphans had been made, what calamities brought upon Grecian states, to collect that object of pride for the Athenian people."

* Caria and Chalcedon were the northern and southern extremities of real or asserted Athenian dominion on the western side of ancient Asia.

It is the very source of greatness :—answer :—

Art not a knave ?—art not o'the forum ?*—hast not

A front of brass ?—can Fortune set her seal

Of greatness with more certainty upon thee ?

Saus. I cannot find in me that worthiness
And seal of future power you vaunt so mightily.

Dem. Anan ! why sure thou hast some squeamishness
Of honesty about thee ! All's not right,

I fear :—answer, art fair ?—art honest ?—art

A gentleman ?†—how say'st ?

Saus. (*coldly.*) Not I, by G—d !
I am, as all my fathers were—a blackguard.

Dem. Then thou art blest :—Fortune hath stamp'd and
mark'd thee
For state-affairs.

Saus. Nay, I want skill in music ;‡

* The agora or forum was the resort of all the idle and profligate in Athens. When Theophrastus describes a vicious character, the agora is sure to be the scene in which some part of it is laid.

† The word used in the text is that which, in the Socratic school, signified the utmost perfection of which our nature is capable. An English translator may take pride in feeling that his own language can not only supply a word which comes nearest in meaning to the

αρετή of the ancients, but that his own country is that where most examples of it are to be found in existence. Some apology, perhaps, is due for the manner in which the reply to the question in the text is worded ; but the translation is literal, and the moral disgust, which it is meant to convey, forms some justification, it is hoped, in retaining it.

‡ A knowledge of music formed one of the elementary branches of Athenian education. It was ne-

And am the sorriest dabster e'en at letters.*

Dem. Better you wanted that small skill you boast—

cessary for the younger people of both sexes, that they might be able to bear a part in the choruses and the hymns which accompanied their many religious solemnities; it was required of men, who held the higher offices of the state, to enable them to give their suffrages with propriety at those contests, which were perpetually submitted to their decision at the theatres and the music-rooms. We must not however confine the term music to the precise meaning which it bears at present. It had a close relation to grammar, and was made to bear upon all the niceties of that wonderful language, "so simple in its analogy," says Mr. Mitford, "of such complex art in its composition and inflexion, of such clearness, force, and elegance in its contexture, and of such singular sweetness, variety, harmony, and majesty in its sound." How nicely susceptible the Attic ear was, and how minutely the lowest persons entered into the intricacies of its composition, may be inferred from the well-known story, related by Cicero, of Theophrastus and the herb-woman.

* In the Athenian course of in-

struction the *γραμματικός* (or grammarian) immediately preceded the *μουσικός* (or music-master). Both preceptors cultivated the imagination, almost exclusively at the expense of the understanding; and to this vicious system of education may be traced much of the wild extravagance and fickle enthusiasm which so strongly marked the Athenian character. Instead of those plain treatises on the nature, extent, and situation of the soil on which we live, and those works on morality, which teach us how to live, the first book which the grammarian invariably put into the hands of his pupil, was the works of Homer. The whole of these (see Plato's Banquet) were not unfrequently committed to memory; and the mischiefs which resulted from thus reading in infancy, what ought to have been the study of riper years, were so many, (see the *Repub.* l. 2. 3.) that Plato, notwithstanding his own evident predilection for the great father of poetry, concludes with banishing him from his infant state. From the criticisms, commentaries, explanations and interpolations, of Homer by the grammarians, the

'Tis all that makes 'gainst thy sufficiencies :
 Music and letters!—tut! we want no gifts
 Like these in men who rule us—morals, quotha?—
 A dolt—a knave,—these are the stuff we make
 Our statesmen of—but come—throw not away
 The blessing gracious heav'n has put upon thee
 By virtue of these oracles.

Saus.

First let me hear

The wording of them.

Dem.

Nay, you'll find no want

Of wisdom in them, nor variety

In the conceit—observe— (*Reads.*)

pupil was committed to the teacher of music; till it was gradually discovered that a long application to music unfits the mind for the acquisition of the sublimer sciences; that as sounds and airs are retained, ideas are apt to slip from the memory, and that the play of the understanding becomes less in proportion as the fingers become more active. De Pauw, tom. ii. p. 128. From the works of Æschines, or the person who wrote in his name, it appears therefore that harp music as well as flute music (vide the Acharnians) fell gradually into disuse: but the grammarians (who

stood nearly in the same relations of rivalry and opposition to the philosophers as the comic writers) did not so easily part with their predilection for poetry; and the exclusive system of the two illustrious grammarians, Aristophanes of Byzantium, and Aristarchus of Alexandria, may almost be traced in the great public schools of England to this day, where the dramatists, the lyric and epic poet, almost entirely supersede the philosopher, and not unfrequently the historian and the orator of antiquity.

(ORACLE.)*

When the monster, half-tanner, half-eagle, shall take
 To his mouth, crooked-beak'd, the dull blood-sucking snake :
 Then if rightly prophetic the future I trace,
 Paphlagonia and †pickle shall sink in disgrace.
 The venders of sausages' star shall arise,
 And Glory come down with a crown from the skies :—
 Unfading their fame, as their sacrifice great,
 Who leave a good trade to take care of the state.

Saus. And how points this to me?

Dem.

I will resolve you.

The tanner-eagle is the Paphlagonian.

Saus. But he is call'd crook-beak'd.—

Dem.

With reason good.

What else his hands but beak and claws and talons?

Saus. But then the serpent—how expound you that?

Dem. Nay, 'tis the clearest of similitudes:

What is a serpent but a lengthy thing?

* Oracles were commonly delivered in verse, or at least committed to measure as soon as they had passed the prophetic lips of the priestess. M. de Pauw, remarking upon those delivered at Delphi, has very justly observed that no where did the god of harmony receive such cruel affronts as in his own sanc-

tuary; where the task of versifying the predictions delivered by the god was committed to persons who sinned not only against poetry, but the commonest rules of metrical composition.

† Most probably the liquid used in tanning.

And what your sausage but the same?—again—
 Your sausage is a blood-sucker;—so is
 Your snake—and snake, so runs the prophecy,
 Shall beat the tanner-eagle;—take he heed
 Meantime that no false speeches cozen him.

Saus. The light is broke upon me, and I see
 A call from heav'n in this;—I marvel most
 How I shall do to rule the populace.

Dem. Nought easier: model you upon your trade.
 Deal with the people as with sausages—
 Twist, implicate, embroil;—nothing will hurt,
 So you but make your court to Demus—cheating
 And soothing him with terms of kitchen science.
 All other public talents are your own;
 Your voice is strong, your liver white, and you are
 O' the forum—say, could Diffidence ask more
 To claim the reins of state?—the Pythian god,
 The oracles are in your favour;—clap then
 A chaplet on your head; drop instant prayer
 Unto Coalemus,* and bear your manhood
 Entire against him.

* This demigod (the Genius of Stupidity) is most probably a deity of the author's own creation. Another ideal being, called Cobalos, to whom the sausage-vender also appeals more than once in this play, possessed a more sub-

stantial place in the Attic legends, according to Wieland. That learned writer considers the Cobalos of Aristophanes as nearly allied to Shakspeare's PUCK, and still more to the KOBOLDE of his own countrymen.

Saus. But what aidance may I
Expect? The wealthier fear, the meaner folk
Pay the most crouching rev'rence to him.

Dem. Nay, nay,
The Knights will be your friends; there are among them
Some twice five hundred, who detest him: citizens
Of breeding and of mark, be sure, will side
With you, and such spectators here as boast
Right-minded notions—what's more to the purpose,
Thou'lt lack no aid which heav'n and I can give.
But see thou shew no fear: none needs: the face
You'll see is not the Paphlagonian's,
Nor bears its nice impress: for our artificers
Took fright and would not give a semblance of it—
It matters not:—an audience like this
Needs no such aidance to their nice discernment.

SCENE VI.

NICIAS, DEMOSTHENES, CLEON, SAUSAGE-VENDER,
CHORUS.

Nic. He comes, he comes, the cursed Paphlagonian!

Cleon, whose entrance has been thus artfully delayed, at length makes his appearance: he begins immediately with

the common popular cry of Athens, that a conspiracy is on foot, and that the democracy is in danger: he remarks the cup from which Demosthenes had made his libation:—it was a cup from Chalcis,* and *consequently* proved most clearly that the two slaves were stirring up the Chalcidians to a revolt: death of course was to be the punishment of such an atrocity. At the sight of his terrible antagonist, the sausage-vender's courage forsakes him, and he endeavours to make his escape: he is brought back, however, to the charge by Demosthenes, who makes a powerful appeal to the Knights. "Now, gentlemen of the horse, is the time to give your assistance." Two of them are summoned by name—"Simon†—Panætius—to the right wing! forward." The Knights are obedient to the summons. Demosthenes turns triumphantly to the sausage-vender, and bids him mark the

* The revolt among the Chalcidians (not those of Eubœa, as the learned Casaubon inadvertently observes, but of Thrace) actually broke out about this time; and the serious consequences, with which it was attended, could little have been foreseen by the poet, or, with all his audacity, he would hardly have ventured to joke upon the subject. The Athenians lost by this revolt one of those valuable dependencies, (Amphipolis,) from whose wealth their

republic chiefly derived its power; but posterity has gained by it one of the most incomparable histories, which any age or country ever produced. The works of Thucydides, Xenophon, Dante, and Clarendon, form indeed the best compensation for the acts of injustice, which have too often disgraced the annals of free governments both in ancient and modern times.

† It was a person of this name, whom Xenophon followed in his Treatise on Horsemanship.

dust which announced the approach of this new body of auxiliaries. The attack of the Knights, who are thus artfully interwoven into the business of the piece, commences in a burst of double trochaics, the common metre for expressing strong emotion on the Greek stage. It is observable that the name of the object of their attack never escapes their lips.*

* The reader has already been apprised of the coarse invective, which many of the following scenes will exhibit. If we were to consult those curious little Provençal poems, called *tensons*, in which the knights of a later period contested with each other the prize of composition with as much heat as they did the prize of valour, we should perhaps find instances of recrimination not less gross than those exhibited in the following comedy. A *tenson* is preserved, in which Albert Malespina and Rambaud de Vaqueiras, two of the greatest lords and most valiant captains of the thirteenth century, reproach each other with having deceived their allies by false oaths, and *with having robbed on the high roads*. As these couplets were extemporaneous productions, an excellent critic and historian (M. Sismondi)

charitably demands that allowance should be made for the heat of the moment, and the difficulty perhaps of finding a rhyme. The heroes of chivalry however were not unfrequently given to be foul-mouthed. Two French knights, in one of Mr. Ellis's specimens, call Richard Cœur-de-Lion a *taylard*; Charlemagne hits his nephew Roland a great blow on the nose, and styles him a traitor; while the courtiers both of Arthur and Charlemagne (another substantial reason for considering the latter as Charles Martel) repeatedly call their monarch a fool, and treat him with the utmost contempt. See particularly the *Morgante Maggiore*, a poem which affords us so many domestic traits of the heroes, whom we have been accustomed to admire in Ariosto and Tasso.

CHORUS.

Stripes and torment, whips and scourges, for the toll-collecting knave!
 Knighthood wounded, troops confounded, chastisement and vengeance
 crave.

Taxes sinking, tributes shrinking, mark his appetite for plunder;
 At his crawl and rav'ning maw dykes and whirlpools fail for wonder
 Explanation and evasion—covert art and close deceit—
 Fraudful funning, force and cunning, who with him in these compete?
 He can cheat and eke repeat twenty times his felon feat,
 All before yon blessed sun has quench'd his lamp of glowing heat.
 Then to him—pursue him—strike, shiver, and hew him;
 Confound him and pound him, and storm all around him—

And keep wary eye,
 Looking round, far and nigh,
 Or with the same ease
 As the kuave Eucrates,*
 Through the chaff and the bran
 Made a way, will this man
 Discover some plan,
 Corner, hole, crack, or cran-
 ny, your eyes to trepan,
 And escape as he can.

* Eucrates appears to have speculated in flour as well as in flax. In his office of public treasurer, he disappeared with a large sum of the

public money. In Athens, where every thing was made a subject of pleasantries, the escape of Eucrates passed into a *bon-mot*.

Confounded by an attack, which commences so vigorously, Cleon calls loudly on the members of the *Heliaea* (the high court of judicature) for help.

Judges, jurymen, or pleaders, you whose soul is in your fee; (
 You that in a three-piec'd obol, father, mother, brother see;
 You, whose food I'm still providing, straining voice through right and wrong—

Mark and see—conspiracy drives and buffets me along!

CHO. 'Tis with reason—'tis in season—'tis as you yourself have done:
 Thou fang, thou claw—thou gulph, thou maw! yielding partage fair to none.

Where's the officer at audit but has felt your cursed gripe?
 Squeez'd and tried with nice discernment, whether yet the wretch be ripe.
 Like the men our fings who gather, you are skilful to discern,
 Which is green and which is ripe, and which is just upon the turn.
 Is there one well-purs'd among us, lamb-like in *heart and life,
 Link'd and wedded to retirement, hating bus'ness, hating strife?
 Soon your greedy eye's upon him—when his mind is least at home,—
 Room and place—from farthest Thrace,† at your bidding he must come.

* How difficult it was for the most quiet and cautious person to live undisturbed in Athens, is most clearly evinced by those naïve confessions, which the licensed garrulity of old age, and the consciousness of an upright and well-spent life, allowed Isocrates to make in his later speeches. See particu-

larly the Oration de Permutatione and that called the Panathenaic.

† Some of the most valuable colonies of Athens lay in the Chersonesus of Thrace, and consequently many of the richest citizens made it their occasional residence.

Foot and hand are straight upon him—neck and shoulder* in your grip,
To the ground anon he's thrown, and you smite †him on the hip.

Cleon (fawning.) Ill from you comes this irruption, you for whom my
cares provide,

To reward old deeds of valour, stone and monumental pride.

'Twas my purpose to deliver words and speech to that intent—
And for such my good intentions must I be thus tempest-rent?

CHO. Fawning braggart, proud deceiver, yielding like a pliant thong!
We are not old men to cozen and to gull with lying tongue.

Fraud or force—assault or parry—at all points will we pursue thee:
And the course which first exalted, knave, that same shall now undo thee.

Cleon. (to the audience.) Town and weal—I make appeal—back and
breast these monsters feel.

CHO. Have we wrung a clamour from thee, pest and ruin of our town?

Saus. Clamour as he will, I'll raise a voice that shall his clamour drown.

CHO. To outreach this knave in speech were a great and glorious feat—
But to pass in face and brass—that were triumph all complete.
Then might fly to earth and sky notes of vict'ry pæan'd high!

Cleon (to the audience.) Allegation—affirmation—I am here prepared
to make

That this man, (*pointing to the Sausage-vender*), shipp'd spars and †timber
and—sausages for Sparta's sake.

* Some terms of the palaestra are here introduced, the exact meaning of which does not appear to be thoroughly understood. The learned reader is referred to Scaliger's

note on the passage in Kuster's edition of Aristophanes.

† Literally, *you swallow him up, like the leaf collabus.*

‡ Certain forbidden articles of

Saus. Head and oath, I stake them both, and free before this presence
say,

That the Hall a guest most hungry sees in this man (*pointing to Cleon*)
ev'ry day;

He walks in with belly empty and with full one goes away.

Dem. Add to this, on my witness, that in covert close disguise,
Of fish and flesh and bread most fragrant—he makes there unlawful prize:
Pericles, in all his grandeur, ne'er was gifted in such guise.

Cleon (loudly.) Fate hath mark'd you with her eye:
Yet awhile and both must die.

Saus. (louder.) Pitch your voice, knave, as you will:
I'll that voice out-clamour still.

Cleon (crescendo.) When I soar, the ocean's roar
Fails for very wonder.

Saus. In my throat I've but one note,
And that note is—thunder. (*Speaking very loud.*)

Cleon. I have test your parts to try:
Look at me, nor wink your eye.

Saus. Be your challenge on your head: (*Looks without
winking.*)

(*Scornfully*) Where suppose ye I was bred?

Cleon. I can steal, and, matchless grace!
Own it with unblushing face,
You dare not thus pursue it.

exportation and some articles of plays of words, which it is impos-
sible to preserve in a translation.
cookery are confounded together
in the original by one of those

Saus. Empty boasting, void as air!
 I can steal, and then outswear
 The man who saw me do it.

Cleon (mortified.) Small applause your feats demand:

 The art 'tis known
 Is not your own;
 You're but a knave at second hand.
 But to the hall, anon, I go,
 Incontinent our chairmen know,
 You've intestines here which owe
 A tythe to Jove and heaven.

Cho. Wretch! without a parallel—
 Son of thunder—child of hell,—
 Creature of one mighty sense,
 Concentrated impudence!—
 From earth's centre to the sea,
 Nature stinks of that and thee.

 It stalks at the bar,
 It lurks at the tolls;
 In th' Assembly, black war
 And defiance it rolls.
 It speaks to our ears
 In an accent of thunder;
 It climbs to the spheres
 And rives heav'n asunder.

Athens deafens at the sound in her ears still drumming;

While seated high,
 You keep an eye
 Upon the tolls, like those who spy
 If tunny-fish be coming.

Cleon. It scapes me not, whose hands this plot have *patch'd* for my
 undoing.

Saus. Thanks for the word—'tis well preferr'd and asks a short pur-
 suing,—

To stuff intestines is my trade, as yours the art of shoeing.
 By the same sign, a scurvy hide your skill was lately trying;
 The bumpkins heard, and out of hand were all for shoes applying.
 Solid and good the leather seem'd, yet scarce was sol in ocean,
 But two large fists had found within full pow'r of locomotion.

Dem. Myself can best this truth attest—I shod me in his leather;
 My burg just reach'd, the skin so stretch'd, I scarce my point could weather.
 My townsmen sneer'd—my neighbours jeer'd—'twas ask'd thro' all the
 quarter—

Came you in boots, sir, or a boat—by land, sir, or by water?

Cho. From the first unto the last,
 Never was this man surpast
 In the lawyer's shield and pass,—
 Front of iron, face of brass!
 This it is, wherewith he bilks
 Wealthy foreigners, and milks
 Sojourners both all and one.

Mark *Hippodamus's son! (*Pointing to him among the audience.*)

At his sight he feels undone,
And his tears in torrents run!

But my eyes—transport-fraught—
Have at length vision caught
Of a man in tongue-war
His superior by far:
One that leaves him behind
In each trick of the mind,
Quirks, and heart-diving wiles,
And the craft of false smiles,
Covert art and pretence,
And bold plain impudence:—
For his very emanations
Are a common thief's sensations.

But thou, (*turning to Sausage-vender,*) whose breeding and whose feeding
were in those schools and masters,

From whence proceed all those who breed our present state-disasters,—
Unfold thy speech—direct and teach in eloquent oration

That they are naught who'd have us taught a virtuous education. }

Saus. Then at a word must first be heard my rival's estimation.

Cleon (eagerly). I claim precedence in my speech—nor you my right deny, sir.

Saus. Your reason,—plea?—mere knavery! (*proudly*) marry, and what am I, sir?

* Hippodamus was a celebrated architect. See Meursius de Piræo, c. 2.

I stake my fame and this way claim a right to prior speaking.

CHOR. (*gravely.*) The reason's good, well understood;—if more the foe
be seeking,

Be it replied—that you're a knave and not of new creation,
But known and tried—on either side—through all your generation.

Cleon (*to Saus.*) Dost still oppose?

Saus. 'Fore friends and foes.

Cleon. My soul is in commotion:—

By Earth!—

Saus. By Air!—

Cleon. I vow!

Saus. I swear!

Cleon. By Jupiter!—

Saus. By Ocean!—

Cleon. O I shall choke—

Saus. You shall not choke—myself am your prevention.

CHO. (*to Saus.*) Forbear, forbear, my friend, nor mar so useful an
intention!

Cleon (*to Saus.*) Discuss—propound your cause—your ground for these
your words nefarious.

Saus. My pow'rs of speech—my art to reach phrase season'd high and
various—

Cleon (*contemptuously.*) Your pow'rs of speech!—ill fare the cause
beneath your hands e'er falling—

Batter'd and rent, 'twill soon present a sample of your calling.

The same disease will fortune you—that meets our eyes not rarely:—

Hear—mark—reply, and own that I discuss the matter fairly.

Some petty suit 'gainst strangers gain'd—anon you're set a-crowing;

The mighty feat becomes forthwith a birth that's ever growing.

By day, by night, on foot, on horse, when riding or when walking,—

Your life a mere soliloquy—still of this feat you're talking.*

You fall to drinking water next—on generous wine you trample,

While friends are sore—worn o'er and o'er with specimen and sample.

And this attain'd, you think you've gain'd the palm of oratory—

Heav'n help thee, silly one, you've yet to learn another story.

Saus. And what is your own beverage, its mode? its preparation?

That you alone have found the art to tongue-tie all the nation?

Cleon (fiercely.) And who dares bandy words with me, or meet me in oration?—

'Tis but to eat some tunny-fish and sup a strong potation,

And I am he that dare set free my tongue in loose reviling,

'Gainst all our chiefs in Pylus' fort long charge and crimes compiling.

Saus. (fiercely.) At speech or feat, at word or meat, mark here your fit opponent—

Let ribs of beef this frame-work line—let tripe form part component:

* The extreme disposition of the Athenians to garrulity is painted with admirable humour by Theophrastus; vide Char. 3. 7. Isocrates, who did not spare his countrymen, rallies them also on the same topic. Our passion, says he, for talking is insatiable: we are ever indeed commending moderation and fitness of season, and if our ordinary language might be

believed, they are qualities which surpass all others; but the moment we imagine we have any thing to offer ourselves, all moderation is at an end; something has still been left unsaid, some little addition is yet to be made, and fitness of season might almost be thought to be synonymous with unlimited duration. De Permuta. v. ii. p. 411.

Let me but sup the broth clean up, and—no ablutions making—
The advocates I'll throttle all, and Nicias set a-quaking.*

CHO. (*with gravity, to Saus.*) Your speech well ran as it began,
nor ask'd the end aspersion—

But to sup broth, nor ask your friends,—may gender some aversion.

A translator may easily feel doubtful in what light this scene will appear to an English reader. If he should think there is fire and vigour in it, he may be assured that that vigour does not diminish; if he considers it more coarse than humorous, no promise can be held out that the dialogue becomes more refined; on the contrary, it immediately assumes a character of †threat and recrimination which the

* The excessive timidity of Nicias is satirized by many of the comic writers of his time. Plutarch, in his *Life of Nicias*, has quoted some strong passages from Telecleides, Eupolis, and Phrynichus, to this effect; but his own observations are still stronger, and mark in an extraordinary manner the fears to which persons of property were subjected in a democracy like Athens. He (Nicias) was so afraid of informers, says Plutarch, that he would neither venture to eat nor converse with any of the citizens, nor would he visit, or be visited, or, in a word, enter into any amusements of this kind. When he was Archon, he used to stay in court till night, be-

ing always the first that came, and the last that went away. When no public business called him from home, it was no easy matter to get access to him, for he kept himself close within doors; and when any came to speak with him, he had some particular friend ready who went to the gate, desiring Nicias might be excused, because he was then taken up with some important affairs relating to the state.

† The small omission which is here made, may not inadequately be supplied from Shakspeare's *Timon of Athens*. The poet of all ages and all times has caught the very scurrility of the old comedy in the following little dialogue.

most fastidious taste might object to without being thought over-delicate. The Greeks, however, allowed a wider range to their humour than we do: and the exertions of the Sausage-vender, so far from offending the moral CHORUS, are rewarded by the applauses of those friends in the shape of the following reflexions—"Fire is not the most burning thing in nature: and, shameless as the words are, which we hear continually in our city, it seems there are words of still more frontless impudence,—courage, thou illustrious vender of sausages!—what you have done already is by no means despicable—but persevere—you have your enemy already by the waist, throw him once to the ground, and you'll find him a very bankrupt in courage."

Saus. Nor am myself unschool'd what man I have
T' encounter with—coward he is at heart,

Tim. I had rather be a beggar's dog, than Apemantus.

Ap. Thou art the cap of all the fools alive.

Tim. Would thou wert good enough to spit upon.

A plague on thee!

Ap. Thou art too bad to curse.

Tim. All villains, that do stand by thee, are pure.

Ap. There is no leprosie but what thou speak'st.

Tim. If I name thee.—I'll beat thee; but I should infect my hands.

Ap. I would my tongue could rot them off!

Tim. Away, thou issue of a mangy dog!

Choler does kill me, that thou art alive:

I swoon to see thee.

Ap. Would thou wouldst burst!

Tim. Away thou tedious rogue, I am sorry I shall lose a stone by thee.

Ap. Beast!

Tim. Slave!

Ap. Toad!

Tim. Rogue! rogue! rogue!

And only wears a show of bravery
 When his false sickle reaps another's harvest.
~~Reaping where others sow'd~~, his ears he harvests;
 And having dried them, looks him out a purchaser.

This of course alludes to the affair of Pylus and the money which Cleon hoped to make of the prisoners who had there fallen into his hands. Cleon affects an utter indifference to all these charges. "I am perfectly safe," says he, "while the senate exists, and while Demus remains in a sedentary state, and more like an image* than a living person. A consciousness of self-security, however, does not abate a warm feeling of resentment against his adversary. "I hate you," says he, turning to the persecuting sausage-vender, "from the bottom of my heart; and if ever this feeling cease, may I become one of Cratinus's pillows,† or be taught to sing a part in a tragedy of Morsimus." This attack rouses the acrimony of the CHORUS, who return the assault in the following manner.

* Suidas derives the verb, by which the representative of the Athenian people is characterised, from Macco, a woman, who to the misfortune of dumbness added intolerable stupidity. Wieland supposes that the scene opened in this part and discovered Demus sitting as described in the text.

† Cratinus and Morsimus were two dramatic rivals of Aristopha-

nes. The objection which Cleon professes to being one of the pillows of the former, relates to a little piece of private history, from which the audience were led to infer, that intemperance had produced certain infirmities in the old bard, and that the fleeces, or whatever else supported him at table, were frequently sufferers by its effects.

CHORUS.

Matchless this knave!—at ear and eye,
 Mouth, touch, and taste—he's bribery.
 On beds of fragrant flowers he sips
 Corruption at his very lips.
 Some day shall end his guilty reign;
 The same foul means that work'd his gain
 Shall make him render it again. }
 Then will I sing and sportive say,
 "A cup, a cup, to bless this day!
 A cup, a cup, I'll bathe in wine—"
 See Julius' aged *son incline—
 One generous joy he dares to steal
 And keep his eyes awhile from—meal.
 He rends the welkin with applause
 And chants full Pæans in so just a cause.

The new statesman, however, was quite equal to his own
 defence; and to convince his friends, that their interference
 was unnecessary, he records some childish traits of himself:
 many were the cheats, says he, I put upon the cooks.
 Look, boys, yonder, I was wont to say; the spring's at hand,

* The person here satirized, according to the Scholiast, supplied the Prytaneum or Public Hall with bread, and kept a vigilant eye that he was not defrauded in his deal-

ings. Casaubon is unwilling to let him off so cheaply, and adds to his offences, that he had turned a great dearth of corn in Athens to his private advantage.

for yonder is the swallow.* They gap'd and gaz'd, while I, meantime, made booty. In general, continues he, these tricks of mine escap'd observation: and what if any one took note? it was but hiding the prize awhile, and making solemn oath that I knew nothing of the theft, and all was well. My dexterity was observed by one of our public orators, and it cannot be, said the gentleman, with a prophetic air, but this boy will one day have charge of the public purse. The storm of language now takes another direction, and is carried on almost entirely in nautical terms.

* The swallow, as the harbinger of spring, was a favourite bird among the Greeks: his first appearance made a holiday for the Greek boys, and a song has been preserved in Athenæus, (lib. viii. p. 360.) by which the little mendicants used to levy contributions on the good-nature of their fellow-citizens.

The swallow, the swallow has burst
on the sight,

He brings us gay seasons of vernal
delight;

His back it is sable, his belly is
white.

Can your pantry nought spare,
That his palate may please,

A fig—or a pear—

Or a slice of rich cheese?

Mark, he bars all delay:

At a word, my friend, say,

Is it yes,—is it nay?

Do we go?—do we stay?—

One gift and we're gone:

Refuse, and anon

On your gate and your door

All our fury we pour.

Or our strength shall be tried

On your sweet little bride;

From her seat we will tear her:

From her home we will bear her:

She is light, and will ask

But small hands to the task.—

Let your bounty then lift

A small aid to our mirth;

And whatever the gift,

Let its size speak its worth.

The swallow, the swallow

Upon you doth wait:

An almsman and suppliant

He stands at your gate:

Set open, set open

Your gate and your door;

Neither giants nor grey-beards,—

We your bounty implore.

Cleon declares that his opponent has robbed the Athenians of many a talent. To add to the pleasantry of laying such a charge upon a man who possessed nothing but his knife and his chopping-block, Cleon confirms the accusation by an oath, which the Greeks reckoned the most solemn of all;—he swears by the mysterious name of Ceres. The CHORUS affect some terror at this accusation: let go your rope, say they to their friend, and drive before the wind; it is the wind Cæsius (a violent stormy wind) and blows up *calumnies*. Cleon follows his blow with asserting that the sausage-vender, to his certain knowledge, had received ten talents from Potidæa. “Will you take one of them,” says his rival, “and hold your tongue about the matter?” That he will most gladly, says the CHORUS: see, the wind is going down already. Cleon continues his threats.

Cleon. Four charges have I 'gainst you, and in each
Assess the damage at a *hundred talents.

Saus. I've twenty 'gainst yourself, and twice five hundred;
The twenty are for absence and desertion—
The thousand note your shameless peculations.

Cleon. Your birth derives from those, whose hands profan'd—

Most execrable they!—the goddess' temple.†

* In trials at Athens, the plaintiff stated not only the offence committed, but the punishment and extent of punishment which he thought due to it.

† An occurrence in Grecian history is here alluded to, which happened about a century before the performance of this play. Some partizans of Cylon, who had aspired

Saus. Your grandsire rank'd among the satellites—

Cleon. Of whom?

Saus. Of Hippias' consort, fairest—Byrsinë.*

If the reader should think that the abuse of this pair has reached its climax, he has yet to learn the perseverance and extent of Grecian invective—the two rivals compass half the circle of Grecian science for terms of reproach, before they conclude;—the builder's art, the powers of the nail and the hammer, the glue-pot, the carpenter's yard, the art of running and casting metal, the crafts of the founder, the brazier, the cheesemonger, and the currier, all furnish terms, which render their sarcasms more poignant, and alternately turn the tide of victory. The storm is indeed kept up so loudly and incessantly, that Cleon is fain to throw himself upon the senate, and challenges his rival to meet him at that

to the sovereignty of Athens, had been taken from the altars of Minerva, and under the direction of Megacles, the archon, put to death. For this sacrilege, the whole family of the Megacleidæ, with all their descendants, were declared to be for ever execrable. The Spartans, at the commencement of the Peloponnesian war, attempted to make use of this occurrence against Pericles, who by the mother's side was descended from

Megacles. Thucyd. l. i. c. 126. 127. Plut. Life of Pericles.

* The wife of Hippias was named Myrrhinë: the poet changes the name into Byrsinë, in order to raise a laugh at the former trade and occupation of Cleon. The English reader will sometimes entertain no very exalted idea of Grecian wit; and this is one passage among many others, where a translator of Aristophanes must feel himself upon very unsteady ground.

awful bar. His antagonist professes his readiness to do so : the CHORUS, considering him as one of the combatants who were going to exhibit in the wrestling-school, anoint his body with the fat of his own sausages, that he “ may slip from his adversary’s calumnies :” they feed him like a fighting cock with pungent garlic ; they remind him (in allusion to the combats of the same bird) to peck at his adversary,—to tread him down,—to gnaw his crest,—and swallow his gills ; and they finally recommend him to the protection of that divinity, which, in modern times, would, under the same mythology, have presided over the Palais Royal of Paris and the Piazza di Marco of Venice.

May the spirit that’s in me direct thee ;

And Jove of the Market protect thee ;

May the pride of my blessing erect thee

To efforts and enterprize glorious ;

And when next you’re descried,

May it be in the pride

Of conquest and valour victorious. [*Exit*

Sausage vender.

To a much harder task (*turning to the audience*)

I am bent, while I ask

A hearing from those,

Who in verse and in prose

For their tact and their skill are notorious.

PARABASIS.*

Were it one of that †old school, learned sirs, who long the rule
and the tone to our drama have given,
Who his lessons and his verse having ‡taught us to rehearse,
would before this high presence have driven;
'Tis great chance that his request, however warmly prest,
might have met with no easy compliance:—
But indulgent we have heard the petitions of a bard
of new mettle and noblest appliance.

* When a writer at Athens had completed a dramatic work, he generally put it into the hands of one of those wealthy persons who either voluntarily undertook, or by compulsion of the law were enjoined, to defray the expenses of the choral and theatrical exhibitions. This was called *χορηγία*. Aristophanes explains why he had been backward in complying with this established custom. The parabasis itself displays a feeling of ingratitude in the Athenians, which excites as much indignation, as the courage with which it is here exposed, demands applause.

† The more immediate precursors of Aristophanes on the comic stage were Chionides, Magnes, and Deinolochus. Nothing of their

works has come down to us but the titles of some of them.

‡ From the quality of their writing materials, the Greeks had not the convenience of copying their compositions with facility: the parts therefore of a drama were studied from the repeated delivery of the poet, and the Chorus exercised in the same manner. This was called teaching a piece. In tragedy, (and most probably in comedy,) not merely the poetry, but the musical accompaniment, the scenical decoration and representation, were all the creation of the poet. The player was a mere tool, and his excellence consisted in the accuracy with which he filled up his part, and by no means in arbitrary bravura, or an ostentatious display of skill.—*Schlegel*

And well may he command aid and service at our hand ;

for his hatreds and ours closely blending

Into one concurring point leap, and hand and heart and joint

to the same noble object are tending.

He no shade nor shelter seeks ;—what he thinks he boldly speaks ;—

neither skirmish nor conflict declining,

He marches all elate 'gainst that Typhon of the state,

storm and hurricane and tempest combining.

Marvel much we hear has grown, and inquiries through the town

of the poet have been most unsparing,

(With submission be it known that these words are not our own,

but his own proper speech and declaring,)

Why his dramas hitherto came not forward as was due,

their own proper Choregus* obtaining ;

Take us with you, sirs, awhile and a moment's easy toil

will in brief be the reason explaining.

* The office of CHOREGUS, or Chorus-master, was both honourable and expensive. Each of the ten tribes furnished one annually, and his business was to defray the expenses of the scenical representations and those of the solemn festivals. If the tribe were too poor to provide a choregus, the expense fell upon the state. Sometimes the charge was divided between two persons ; sometimes the choregus of one tribe was allowed

to conduct the CHORUS of another tribe. The choregus was by law to be at least forty years of age : upon him rested the choice of the persons composing the CHORUS ; and they were generally taken from the youth of the tribe to which he belonged. A good flute-player, to modulate their voices, and a skilful dancing-master to regulate their steps and gestures, would naturally be among the chief objects of his research. Some months before

'Twas no folly bred, we say, this distrust and cold delay,
 but a sense of th' extreme application
 And the toil* which he who woos in our town the Comic Muse
 must encounter in such his vocation.
 Suitors many (and brisk sparks), as our poet oft remarks,
 pay her court and profoundest attention;

the approach of the festivals, the CHORUS and actors began to be practised in their performance: the choregus frequently maintaining them during the whole of that time in his own house, that they might never be out of his view. At the festivals and pompous processions he appeared at their head, adorned with a gilt crown and a magnificent robe. But it was in the theatre that the chief contention took place between the rival choregi. Judges were solemnly established, and a prize was adjudged to the CHORUS, which had done most honour to the republic. Nothing could exceed the enthusiasm with which this victory was sought and received. The prize was generally a tripod; and the victorious tribe most commonly consecrated it in the street, which from that custom was called the street of tripods. To these tripods were attached notices of the tribe which had gained

the victory—of the archon who presided at the festival—of the citizen, who, under the name of choregus, had furnished the expenses of the company—of the poet who composed the verses—of the master who exercised the CHORUS, and the musician who directed the songs by the sound of his flute. The conquerors of the Persians, says the Abbé Barthelemi, thought it an addition to their celebrity to have appeared at the head of the CHORUS; and on one tripod it might be seen inscribed “The tribe Antiochis gained this prize: Aristeides was the chorus-master: Arcestratus composed the piece.” On another, “Themistocles was the choregus: the tragedy was written by Phrynichus: Adimantus was the archon.” *Le Jeune Anach.* tom. ii. cc. 12. 24.

* See the note at page 201, and Schlegel's *Lectures on Dramatic Literature.* v. i. p. 208.

But of all that love and burn, very few meet due return:—

this observance first bred apprehension.

Then your tempers quick—severe—ever changing with the year—

to this thought added fears more appalling,

And a sense of those disasters which, through you their fickle masters,

old age on your poets sees falling.

Could it 'scape observing sight what was Magnes' wretched plight,

when his hairs and his temples were hoary;

Yet who battled with more zeal or more trophies left to tell

of his former achievements and glory?

He came piping,* dancing, tapping,—fig-gnatting and wing-clapping,—

frog-besmeared and with Lydian grimaces:

Yet he too had his date, nor could wit nor merit great

preserve him, unchang'd, in your graces.

Youth pass'd brilliantly and bright;—when his head was old and white,

strange reverse and hard fortune confronted;

What boots taste or tact forsooth, if they've lost their nicest truth,

or a wit where the edge has grown blunted!

Who Cratinus may forget or the storm of whim and wit

which shook theatres under his guiding?

When Panegyric's song pour'd her flood of praise along,

who but he on the top wave was riding?

Foe nor rival might him meet; planet† and oak ta'en by the feet

did him instant and humble prostration;

* The poet alludes in his peculiar manner to the titles of some of the dramatic works of Magnes.

† There is some allusion here,

For his step was as the tread of a flood that leaves its bed,
and his march it was rude desolation:

Who but he the foremost guest then on gala-day and feast?

What strain fell from harp or musicians,

But "Doro,* Doro sweet, nymph with fig-beslipper'd feet"—
or—"Ye verse-smiths and bard-mechanicians."

Thus in glory was he seen, while his years as yet were green;
but now that his dotage is on him,

God help him! for no eye, of all those who pass him by,
throws a look of compassion upon him.

'Tis a couch, but with the loss of its garnish and its gloss;—
'tis a harp that hath lost all its cunning,—

most probably, to a passage in one of the plays of Cratinus, all of which have unfortunately perished. The praise bestowed upon the old bard, who was living at the time of the exhibition of the Knights, is a little equivocal throughout, and at last ends in a direct reference to his intemperance. Cratinus lived to convince his youthful rival, that his powers were not so much exhausted as he has here described them to be. A play presented by Cratinus in the following year, and formed to meet the allusions here made to his convivial habits, gained the prize against the most elaborate of all the compositions

of Aristophanes, the far-famed Clouds.

* Two celebrated songs of Cratinus began in this manner. The first appears to have been a satire upon the corruption of the magistrates; and those who have attended to the note upon sycophancy, in the comedy of the Acharnians, will be at no loss to understand the epithet which is here joined with the imaginary nymph, who stands for the personification of corruption. The latter song appears to have been aimed at some of the poet's contemporaries, who wrote more from mechanical rules than the fervour of a poetical spirit.

'Tis a pipe where deffest hand may the stops no more command,
 nor on it divisions be running.

*Connas-like, he's chaplet-crown'd, and he paces round and round
 in a circle which never is ended;—

On his head a chaplet hangs, but the curses and the pangs
 of a drought on his lips are suspended.

O if ever yet on bard waited, page-like, high Reward:
 former exploits and just reputation,

By an emphasis of right, sure had earn'd this noble wight
 in the Hall a most constant—potation;†

And in theatres high station;‡ there a mark for Admiration
 to anchor her aspect and face on,

In his honour he should sit, nor serve triflers in the pit
 as an object their rude jests to pass on.

I spare myself the toil to record the buffets vile,
 the affronts and the contumelies hateful,

* Connas was a flute-player, and is not to be confounded with Connus, the preceptor of Socrates in harp music. vid. Plat. in Euthydemo, et Menexeno. From a fragment of Cratinus, Connas appears to have made himself a little conspicuous by constantly wearing a chaplet on his head.

† A pleasantry by surprise. The poet should have said *dinner*: the change is made, in allusion to the intemperance of Cratinus. In

general this species of wit, in which Aristophanes indulges very largely, has more humour in the original than a translation can give; because there the words are nearly similar in sound.

‡ There were distinct seats in the theatre; but the most commodious and honourable places were those near the images of the gods, which were placed on the stage.—*Casaubon.*

Which on *Crates frequent fell, yet I dare you, sirs; to tell,
 where was caterer more pleasing or grateful?
 Who knew better how to lay soup piquant and entremets,
 dainty patties and little side-dishes?
 Where with all your bards a Muse cook'd more delicate ragouts
 or hash'd sentiment so to your wishes?
 Princely cost nor revenue ask'd his banquets it is true;
 yet he is the only stage-master,
 Through all changes and all chances, who undaunted still advances,
 alike master of success and disaster.
 Sirs, ye need no more to hear—ye know whence the hue of fear,
 o'er our bard's cheek of enterprise stealing,
 And why like wiser men, who look forward in their ken,
 in proverbs he's wont to be dealing;

* Crates was first an actor, and afterwards a writer of the Old Comedy: he performed the principal characters in Cratinus's plays, and was the great rival of Aristophanes's favourite actors Callistratus and Philonides. He is said to have

been the first who introduced a drunken character on the Athenian stage. The following fragment on OLD AGE, translated by the learned author of the Observer, is almost all that remains of the works of Crates.

These shrivell'd sinews and this bending frame
 The workmanship of Time's strong hand proclaim.
 Skill'd to reverse whate'er the gods create,
 And make that crooked which they fashion straight.
 Hard choice for men to die—or else to be
 That tott'ring, wretched, wrinkled thing you see!
 Age then we all prefer; for age we pray,
 And travel on to life's last ling'ring day;
 Then sinking slowly down from worse to worse,
 Find heav'n's extorted boon our greatest curse.

Saying—better first explore what the powers of scull and oar,
ere the helm and the rudder you're trying;

At the *prow next take your turn, there the mysteries to learn
of the scud and the winds that are flying.

This mastery attain'd, time it is a skiff were gain'd,
and your †pilotage put to the trial:—

Thus with caution and due heed step by step would he proceed
in a course that should challenge denial.

Nor let it breed offence, if for such befitting sense
and so modest a carriage and bearing,

We ask some mark of state on its author here to wait;—
guard of honour, ‡ procession, or chairing:—

* The *ὑπηρέτης*, says Archbishop Potter, was next under the master: to his care was committed the tackling of the ship, and the rowers had their places assigned by him. He also assisted the master at consultations. *Grec. Ant.* v. ii. p. 146.

† The pilot, says the same learned writer, held a much higher rank in the Greek navy than in ours. He had the care of the ship and government of the seamen, and sat at the stern to steer; all things were managed according to his direction: it was therefore necessary that he should have obtained an exact knowledge of the art of navigation, which consisted chiefly in three things: 1. In the right management of the rudder,

sails, and all the engines used in navigation: 2. In the knowledge of the winds and celestial bodies, their motions and influences: 3. In the knowledge of commodious harbours, rocks, quicksands, and other occurrences on the sea.—*Idem*, p. 144. A still more important part of his duty, the direction of the *διέκπλος*, which so often decided the naval engagements of the ancients, has been omitted by the learned archbishop.

‡ The ancient guard of honour differed much from a modern one, being composed of ships and not of soldiers. According to Casaubon, the complement was eleven ships, or a man of war with eleven oars on each side.

With a shout of such cheering
As Bacchus is hearing,
When vats overflowing
Set Mirth all a-crowing,
And Joy and Wine meet
Hand in hand in each street.
So his purpose attained
And the victory gain'd,
Your bard shall depart
With a rapture-touch'd heart,
While Triumph shall throw
O'er his cheeks such a glow,
That Pleasure might trace
Her own self in his face.

SEMI-CHORUS.

CHORAL HYMN.

Lord of the Waters! king of might,
Whose eyes and ears take stern delight
From neighing steeds and stormy fight
And gally swift pursuing;

From starting car and chariot gay,
And contests on that festive day,

When Athens' sprightly youth display
 Their pride and their—undoing;*

Lord of the dolphins and the spear—
 †Geræstian—Sunian—or more dear,
 If Cronus' name salute thy ear,
 And ‡Phormion's gallant daring;

O come amongst us in thy power,
 Great Neptune; in her trying hour
 Athens knows none so swift to shower
 Aids of immortal bearing.

FULL CHORUS.

Praise and homage let us pay
 To the men of elder day:
 They alone of this our earth
 Ne'er impeach'd their noble birth:
 Plants of an eternal spring,
 Born for endless blossoming.§

* The poet ridicules the young men of fashion, who ruined themselves by running chariots at the public games.

† Epithets of Neptune, derived from Geræstus, a port in Eubœa, and Sunium, the famous promontory in Attica.

‡ For the achievements of this able and active officer see Thucydides, lib. ii.

§ Literally, *worthy to be described on the peplos*. The *peplus* was that superb veil displayed in the magnificent festival of the Panathenæa. The first artists in Athens

Foot or horse—by land or sea
 Still they reach'd at victory;
 Raising high by generous toil
 The splendour of their native soil.
 When they saw their foemen bold,
 They their numbers never told;
 Ready swords and valour high
 Were a help-mate ever nigh.
 If upon the arm they fell;
 'Twas but a *brush, and all was well;
 Rising quick they dealt a wound,
 As they had never touch'd the ground.
 Never then did general,
 Tho' ambitious of the †Hall,
 Pay the tribute of his knee,
 To ‡Cleænctus that he
 Might his commons get cost-free.

}

furnished the designs for this splendid piece of embroidery, and the young ladies, most distinguished for their skill, executed the needlework. Various subjects were represented on it, but the combat of the gods and the giants always formed one. In the corners of this magnificent embroidery were sometimes depicted the heroes and great men of Athens; and the most aspiring of her citizens con-

sidered this distinction as the summit of all human honours.

* An allusion to the customs of the palæstra or wrestlings-school.

† The Prytaneum.

‡ Cleænctus was the author of a law which limited the admissions to the Prytaneum. All persons, therefore, who were ambitious of this honourable distinction, took care to pay their court previously to him.

Rank* and banquet now men ask,
 Or they spurn the soldier's task.
 Not so we, sirs ; we'll still wear
 Athens' wrongs upon our spear ;
 And the best blood in our breast
 Free shall flow at her behest.—
 Nor for this our patriot flame
 Other payment will we claim,
 Than when Peace resumes her sway
 (Nor far distant be that day !)
 None shall taunt reproachful throw,
 That our locks† too trimly flow,
 Nor malignly mark, if we
 With the† bath and brush make free.

CHORAL HYMN.

O thou, whom Patroness we call
 Of this the holiest land of all,
 That circling seas admire ;

* Precedence at religious ceremonies and the public spectacles is the species of rank more particularly intimated here.

† There was a law provided against soldiers observing too much foppery in the arrangement of their hair.

‡ The Greeks, as well as the Romans, indulged very freely in the luxury of the bath ; but it was considered a mark of effeminacy to visit the bath too often ; and I believe there was an express law against the Knights thus offending.

The land where Power delights to dwell,
 And War his mightiest feats can tell,
 And Poesy to sweetest swell
 Attunes her voice and lyre ;

Come, blue-ey'd Maid, and with thee bring
 The goddess of the eagle wing ;
 To help our bold endeavour :
 Long have our armies own'd thy aid,
 O Victory, immortal maid ;
 Now other deeds befits thee tell,
 A bolder foe remains to quell ;
 Give aid then now or never.

CHORUS.

To* chargers and steeds mettle-proof tune the string :
 I speak from self-knowledge in what I now sing—
 In fight and in skirmish and battle-array,
 Their aid has been with us full many a day.

* The learned Casaubon imagines that the poet here satirises the knights for the immoderate attention they paid to their steeds. It was more probably intended as a compliment to the Knights for a service which will be presently

mentioned ; and ingeniously paid through that medium, which every Knight holds most dear. Babieca, Frontino and Bayardo are almost as dear to the readers of romance as Rodrigo, Ruggiero or Rinaldo.

But their feats and achievements by land I shall pass;
 The marvel* and shew and the bravery was,
 When in naval array and equipt like a crew
 Of tars thorough-bred, to the transports they flew.
 Their cabins with† garlic and onions were stor'd;
 Their cans (cheaply bought) were laid duly on board.
 They grasp'd their green oars, and like boatmen did ply,
 And "‡Hippapæ, Ryppapæ, boys!" was the cry;
 "Bear a hand, my brave§ Koppa,—Samphor, lad, pull away,
 (The command came enforc'd twixt a shout and a neigh.)
 Do your work, or we never shall compass the land."—
 The very word brought them to Corinth's proud|| strand.

* The first instance mentioned by Thucydides of Athenian cavalry being transported by sea, occurs in the second year of the Peloponnesian war. Thucyd. t. ii. c. 56.

† The construction of the ancient ships of war rendered it absolutely impossible to carry much provisions on board; and the crews therefore were generally debarked for the purposes both of refreshment and sleep. The reader of Thucydides is often surprised by unexpected events, resulting from the necessities to which this want of accommodation exposed the Grecian fleets. See, among other instances, l. viii. §. 95.

‡ *Hippape!* a humorous alteration for the common exhortatory word among Greek sailors, *Ryppapæ*. It is not to be expected that naval language should be very harmonious. In the old romance of Richard Cœur de Lion, that valorous knight orders his rowers to exert themselves.

"Roweth on fast: who that is faint,
 In evil water may he be dreynt:"
 They rowed fast and sung thereto
 With *kevelow* and *rumbeloo*.

§ Horses were thus called, who were marked on the thigh with the letter K. Those marked with an S were called Samphoræ.

|| The poet alludes to an expedition recently conducted (Thucyd.

They landed;—and who had young blood in their veins
 With their hoofs beat a bed up: but the clothes ask'd more pains.
 Their food was young pungers; and he who was cast
 By good luck on a crab, held a princely repast.
 The best grass was but dull to't—and hence the bon-mot,
 (Whether true, sirs, or false, best *Theorus can shew,)
 Of a crab on the spot,—‘ By the lord of the ocean,
 I speak to my soul’s inward pain and commotion,
 Of these horses and horsemen I well may complain;
 They compass the land and they fathom the main,
 And escape from their full omnipresence is vain.’

t. iv. c. 44.) under Nicias against Corinth, in which the exertions of the Knights were particularly conspicuous. The praise is bestowed upon the horses; but the audience readily applied the panegyric.

* Two persons are attacked in the following lines, Carcinus and Theorus. Carcinus in Greek sig-

nifies a crab, and it appears that he was in the habit of passing much of his time in Corinth, for the sake of the gaieties and guilty pleasures of that luxurious and splendid town. Theorus and Carcinus had both some way or other incurred the displeasure of the Knights.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

SAUSAGE-SELLER, CHORUS.

THE anxiety of the CHORUS is relieved at the end of this Intermede by the re-entrance of the Sausage-seller; and the *name which he assumes to himself, is sufficient at once to convince them that his exertions in the †Senate

* In allusion to the common termination of Athenian names, Thrasybulus, Neobulus, Critobulus, &c. he tells them that he has returned a Nicobulus (*victor in the senate*) to them.

† A succinct account of this branch of the Athenian polity may not perhaps be unacceptable to the reader. The Athenian Senate consisted of five hundred members: i. e. fifty from each of the ten tribes. It was elected every year, and each member's life and character underwent a strict examination, before he was admitted into this dignified body. To fill up vacancies and deaths, each tribe furnished a subsidiary body of fifty members. The Attic

year was divided into ten parts; and thus each tribe had in turn the office of presiding in the Senate. The tribe, to whose turn it fell in succession, was called for the time the Prytanes; and during that period, they were excused from all other public duties. In this work the word Prytanes has been generally rendered by the word Chairmen. To avoid confusion, every Prytaneia (or company of Prytanes) was divided into five weeks of days, by which means the fifty Prytanes were subdivided into five Decuriæ; each Decuria having charge of the government for a week. During this period of office, they assumed the name of *Proedri*; out of these one was elected by lot

have been crowned with complete success. A shout of acclamation bursts from that friendly body at this welcome intelligence: they declare, in strong language, how desirous they are to hear a more particular account of his exertions; they are not sure but they would even take a long journey to enjoy the narration. The new favourite does not try their resolution on this point, but proceeds immediately to gratify their wishes.

And trust me, friends, the tale will pay the hearing—

Straight as he went from hence, I clapt all sail

And followed close behind. Within I found him

Launching his bolts and thunder-driving words,

to *preside* over the rest, in each of the seven days: so that of the ten *Proedri*, three were necessarily excluded from presiding. The *President* of the *Proedri* was called *Epistates*. To his custody were committed the public seal, and the keys of the Citadel and the public Exchequer. It was an important trust, and therefore no man was permitted by the law to hold it more than one day, nor to be elected into it a second time. As character and not fortune constituted the right of becoming a member of the Senate, it will be seen that the poorest man in Athens had the chance of holding the sovereign power one day at

least in the year. The Senate held its sittings every day, those only excepted which were appropriated to the public festivals. All acts of this body, whether approved by the Ecclesia (i. e. the General Assembly) or not, were binding for the year they were in office. The especial duty of the Senate was to correct and modify such decrees as were to be submitted to the General Assembly, whose ratification alone passed them into permanent acts of the legislature. Hence the bon-mot of Anacharsis the Scythian: the laws of Athens are discussed by sages, and put into execution by fools.

Denouncing all the Knights, as traitors, vile
Conspirators—jags, crags and masses huge
Of stone were nothing to the monstrous words
His foaming mouth heav'd up. All these to hear
Did the grave Council seriously incline ;
They love a tale of scandal to their hearts,
And his had been as quick in birth as golden-herb.
Mustard was in their faces, and their brows
With frowns were furrow'd up. I saw the storm,
Mark'd how his words had sunk upon them, taking
Their very senses prisoners:—and, oh!
In knavery's name, thought I,—by all the fools
And scrubs and rogues and scoundrels in the town,—
By that same forum, where my early youth
Received its first instruction, let me gather
True courage now: be oil upon my tongue,
And shameless Impudence direct my speech.
Just as these thoughts pass'd over me ; I heard
A sound of thunder pealing on my right—
I mark'd the omen,—grateful, kiss'd the ground—
And pushing briskly thro' the *lattice-work—
Rais'd my voice to its highest pitch, and thus
Began upon them—“ Messieurs of the Senate,

* To keep the crowds from thronging in, the places of public meeting were surrounded with a rope, and serjeants appointed to keep the doors.

I bring good news, and hope your favour for it.
 Anchovies, such as since the war began,
 Ne'er cross'd my eyes for cheapness, do this day
 Adorn our markets"—at the words a calm
 Came over ev'ry face, and all was hush'd—
 A *crown was voted me upon the spot.
 Then I (the thought was of the moment's birth)
 Making a mighty secret of it, bade them
 Put pots and pans in instant requisition,
 And then—one obol loads you with anchovies,
 Said I: anon most violent applause,
 And clapping hands ensued; and every face
 Grew unto mine, gaping in idiot vacancy.
 My Paphlagonian discern'd the humour
 O' the time; and seeing how the members all
 Were tickled most with words, thus utter'd him:
 "Sirs—Gentlemen—'tis my good will and pleasure,
 That for this kindly news we sacrifice
 One hundred† oxen to our patron-goddess."

* A crown or chaplet was a reward usually conferred upon such persons as, by the annunciation of good news, gained the momentary affections of the Athenians.

† When the Athenian people were to be cajoled, a feast or sacrifice (and they were nearly synonymous terms, for a small portion

only of the victim was offered to the gods) was the surest and most effectual mode. It was thus that the abandoned Chares maintained himself in office; who from his share of the plunder made from the temple of Delphi, once feasted the whole people of Athens. (Ath. l. xii. p. 533.) It is curious that

Straight the tide turn'd: each head within the Senate
 Nodded assent and warm good-will to Cleon:
 "What! shall a little bull-flesh gain the day?"
 Thought I within me: then aloud, and shooting
 Beyond his mark:—"I double, sirs, this vote,—
 Nay more, sirs, should to-morrow's sun see sprats
 One hundred to the penny sold, I move
 That we make offering of a thousand goats
 Unto Diana."—Ev'ry head was rais'd;
 And all turn'd eyes incontinent on me.
 This was a blow he ne'er recover'd: straight
 He fell to mutt'ring fooleries and words
 Of no account—the chairman and the officers
 Were now upon him.—All meantime was uproar
 In th' Assembly—Nought talk'd of but anchovies.—
 How far'd our statesman? he with suppliant tones
 Begg'd a few moments pause.—"Rest ye, sirs, rest ye
 Awhile—I have a tale will pay the hearing—
 A herald is arriv'd from Sparta, claiming
 An audience—he brings terms of peace, and craves
 Your leave to utter them before ye." "Peace!"
 Cried all, (their voices one) "is this a time
 To talk of peace?—out, dotard! What, the rogues

the only interpolations made by the thirty tyrants in the MS. laws of Solon, were directed in the same way to the gratification of Athenian appetite. (Oratio Lysiae contra Nicomachum.)

Have heard the price anchovies bear!—marry
 Our needs, sir, ask not peace.—War, war, for us—
 And, chairmen, break the assembly up.” ’Twas done,
 Upon their bidding, straight—who might oppose
 Such clamour?—then, what haste and expedition
 On every side! one moment clears the rails!
 I the meantime steal privately away
 And buy me all the leeks and coriander
 In the market—these I straight make largess of,
 And gratis give as sauce to dress their fish.
 Who may recount the praises infinite
 And groom-like courtesies this bounty gain’d me!
 In short you see a man, that for one pennyworth
 Of coriander vile has purchas’d him
 An entire senate—not a man among them
 But is at my behest and does me rev’rence.*

* Absurd as some parts of the above narration may appear to an English reader, it can hardly be called a caricature of the public meetings in Athens. Every person, conversant with the orators and historians of that singular republic, has occasionally met with instances of ridiculous conduct, which hardly fall below what is here represented: he has seen the most frivolous circumstances swelled into importance, and the

most important trifled with in her noisy and crowded assemblies. The character of them may be estimated from the following well-known stories among others.—When Cleon was in the height of his power with the people, (who at the same time idolized and despised him,) some matter of importance was before the Assembly: the people had met, and Cleon’s presence was impatiently expected. His tardiness occasioned strong

It will readily be imagined that this speech elicits a song of applause from the delighted CHORUS. .

CHORUS.

Well, my son, hast thou begun and well hast thou competed;
Rich bliss and gain wilt thou attain, thy mighty task completed.

He, thy rival, shall admire,
Chok'd with passion, pale with ire,
Thy audacity and fire:

}

murmurs of disapprobation: at length he made his appearance: he rose in his place, and addressing the people, told them that he had some strangers to entertain at his table, and begged that the meeting might be deferred to another day. The people, instead of resenting this impertinence, started from their seats, clapped their hands violently in token of applause; and the orator was in greater credit than ever. The Assembly, one day in later times, had been thrown into a violent state of agitation and inquietude by the account of some hostilities committed by Philip of Macedon. At this trying moment the rostrum was mounted by a man of diminutive stature and ill-made; it was Leon, the ambassador from Byzantium. The Assembly broke out

into shouts of laughter. Leon could hardly gain a moment's attention. "Gentlemen," said he, at length, "you are pleased to be merry: but what if you were to see my wife? *she* scarcely reaches my knee: and yet," continued he, with a grave face and pompous tone of voice, "when a dispute takes place between us, little as we are, all Byzantium cannot contain us!" A stroke of pleasantry was sure to succeed at Athens: the mock solemnity of Leon amused the Assembly; and the succours which he came to demand were instantly granted, though Philip's proceeding had very justly created no small degree of apprehension in the Athenian people for their own safety.—See Le Jeune Anacharsis, and Crebillon's *Lettres Athéniennes*.

He shall own, abash'd, in thee

Power and peerless mastery

In all crafts and tricks that be.

At all points art thou equipt,

Eye and tongue with treach'ry tipt,

Soul and body, both are dipt

In deceit and knavery.

Forward, son of mine, undaunted—complete thy bold beginning :

No aid from me shall be delay'd—which may the prize be winning.

SCENE II.

CHORUS, SAUSAGE-VENDER, CLEON.

The Paphlagonian returns to the stage at the conclusion of this address of the CHORUS. He enters “pushing a maimed wave before him,” and with an air as if he could “drink up” his victorious opponent. His thundering aspect and his menacing words are equally lost upon the Sausage-vender, who, in his own language, “is delighted with his opponent’s threats—laughs at his *smoke-boasting*—and makes the fittest answer to his menaces by singing the *mothon*,* and crying cuckow in a circle.” Another scene of altercation now takes place between these intellectual gladiators ;

* The *mothon* was one of the songs which, among the Greeks, were accompanied by a dance. Ath. xiv. 618.

and the reader, who has already had a specimen of Athenian invective, will not perhaps be eager to enter into the details of this second war of words. Some of their strokes however must not be omitted. The Sausage-vender remarks upon his adversary's passion, and asks him if he will have a purse to eat and so allay his wrath. Cleon, after a volley of abuse, threatens to bring him before Demus: that is, in other words, the people. "There," says he, "you will be sure to be worsted—you will find no credit there, while I can play upon him as I please." "You seem to consider this Demus as your own property." "Yes, for I know the morsels which he likes to feed upon." "True, and like children's nurses, you grudge the food you give him—you champ, and champ; and for *one* morsel that you give the child, eat *three* yourself." Cleon now calls loudly for Demus, the representative of the people; and that dignified person makes his appearance: a growl, and an instant charge of *theft upon the parties present, express at once his grandeur, his resentment, and his suspicious temper. The two candidates state their several claims to his favour. "I am the friend of Demus," says Cleon, "and am as

* The article charged as being stolen is the Eiresione. This was an olive branch wrapped in wool; at the festivals Pyanepsia and Thargelia the Athenian boys used to carry branches of this kind in

procession, and then suspend them over the doors of the house. The custom of covering the fronts of the houses with branches on festival days, prevails still in Catholic countries.

much attached to him as a lover to his mistress." "I am your rival in his affections," says the sausage-seller. "Yes, my dear Demus; I have loved you this long time, and it would give me the greatest pleasure to be of service to you: all honest men partake my sentiments; but this man keeps us away and prevents our shewing you proofs of our attachment." He proceeds to state very candidly to Demus that he resembled very much those capricious beauties, who dismiss such suitors from them as are men of probity and honour, and dispose of their favours and affections to the lowest of mankind—to lamplighters, tanners and curriers.* Cleon knew his strong place; he presently therefore proposes that Demus shall call a General Assembly, and that it should be there decided who had most pretensions to his favour. His adversary has no objection, provided the As-

* Isocrates, whose honest virtue and genuine patriotism place him in the same rank among the rhetoricians, as the son of Sophroniscus held among the philosophers, addresses much the same language to the General Assembly. "When you are consulting on your own private affairs, you seek out those advisers, whose superior wisdom enables them best to direct you: but when the affairs of the state are under deliberation, all such persons meet with distrust and

jealousy, and your praises are reserved for the most worthless of those who mount the bema: there the drunken are considered as better disposed to the people than the sober, the irrational than the wise; and the feeders upon the public revenue are more valued than those who execute the laborious offices of the state at their own charges." *Iso. de Pace*, v. i. p. 329. See also *Xenophon de Rep. Ath.* c. 1. ss. 4. 5.

sembly be not held in the PNYX. "The old gentleman," says he, "is a man of excellent sense, while he abides at home; but the moment he goes to that cursed place, he is as much at his wit's ends, as the man who wishes to dry his figs in the sun, and has not a stalk to fasten them by." (This was the Athenian mode of drying figs.) But Demus will hear of no other place. "PNYX is my true and proper seat. I hold my sittings no where else." "Then I am a ruined man," says the sausage-vender.

The CHORUS, as well as the sausage-vender, knew that the gist of the contest must lie in this trial of strength before the General Assembly: they prepare their friend accordingly for the arduous contest.

CHORUS.

Hawser and cable both let free,
We drive before a raging sea.
Mark you plant within your eye
High resolve and bravery.
Words gigantic must be falling,
Overwhelming and appalling;
Such as may the foe constrain
In indissoluble chain.
'Tis a many-colour'd man;
Apt in fancy,—quick in plan:
Making way, where others see
Stern impossibility.

Be full then, impetuous and bright in your daring,
 Clear your decks, and for battle and blood be preparing;
 Let your *dolphins rise high, while the enemy's nearing,
 Or make a full dash, while his vessel is wearing.

The scene now changes to the †PNYX, and the pleadings begin with the author's characteristic humour; Cleon taking the lead.

* Dolphins were vast weights, which might be hoisted and dropped on any vessel passing near, and with such violence as to sink it.

† As Demus in the following scene is supposed to typify the Ecclesia or General Assembly, it may not be amiss to give a short account of that important branch of the Athenian constitution, in which the democracy or real power of the state resided. The Ecclesia consisted of all such as were freemen of Athens, of what quality soever, and generally met to the number of five or six thousand members. These Assemblies were either stated or extraordinary. The stated Assemblies were those held at four regular times during the thirty-five days that each Prytaneia or company of Prytanes

successively presided in the Senate.

Each of these four days had its peculiar duties, and regular public business to transact. Before the gratuity of three obols was allowed to each member for his attendance, it was sometimes necessary to use a little force to compel the attendance of the citizens. The extraordinary Assemblies were such as were summoned by the Generals or the Polemarch, in the case of some sudden and unexpected war. The magistrates who had the care of these Assemblies were the *Prytanes*, the *Proedri*, and the *Epistatae*. The *Prytanes* sometimes called the people together, and always before the meeting set up a programma in some place of general concourse, in which were contained the matters that were to form the subject of

SCENE III.

CLEON, SAUSAGE-SELLER, DEMUS, CHORUS.

Cleon (anapastics.) With our lady divine, the town's saviour and mine,
my prayers make, as meet, their beginning :—(*a pause of affected
devotion*)

If disguise none I wear, while to Demus I swear
such love as from none he is winning,

consideration at the ensuing Assembly. The *Proedri*, as their name imports, held the first places in the Assemblies. Their business was to propose to the people the subjects which they were to deliberate and determine upon in the meeting; at the end of which their offices expired. It was provided by a law, that in every Assembly, one of the Tribes should be appointed by lots to hold the office of *Proedri*, to preside at the *Suggestum*, (or place from which the speeches were delivered,) and defend the commonwealth, by preventing the orators and others from propounding any thing inconsistent with the received laws, or destructive of the peace and welfare of the city. The *Epistates*, or *President* of the Assembly, was chosen by lot out of the *Proedri*; the chief part of his office seems to

have consisted in granting the people liberty to give their voices, which they were not permitted to do till he had given the signal. The Assemblies were held in the Agora, or market-place, in the theatre of Bacchus, or in the Pnyx. They began with expiatory rites, with prayers to the gods for the prosperity of Athens, and with bitter imprecations upon such as should counsel any thing in that Assembly to the prejudice of Athens. (See the Comedy of the Female Parliament, where all the proceedings are parodied with much humour.) When these ceremonies were concluded, the crier, by command of the *Proedri*, repeated the *probuleuma*, or decree of the senate, upon which the Assembly was to deliberate: he then demanded in a loud voice, "which of the men above fifty years of age will make

(Lysicles* I except, and a clause too is left
for the fair† Salabaccha and Cynna,)
May the ‡Hall without tasking my labour, or asking
equivalent, find me a dinner.

If time my love draw to a close, may the saw
take in vengeance my body's dimension ;

May I wither and pine, till I symbol the line,
which without any breadth is extension.

Sau. To love—fair and true—I can make my claim too ;
and if ever it's chain should less bind me ;

May I mince into meat, so minute that who eat,
must have eyes keen as §Attic to find me.

an oration?" The elders having delivered their opinions, the crier made a second proclamation, "It is allowed to every Athenian, in conformity with existing laws, to deliver his sentiments." It was the privilege therefore of every Athenian citizen to give his opinion on public affairs at pleasure, but the task was more commonly left to the public orators, of whom some account has already been given. The curious reader may compare with these accounts of the Athenian Senate and General Assembly, the general establishments of the Italian republics under Otho I. *Hist. des Rép. Ital. t. i. c. 6.*

* Who Lysicles was has been explained already.

† Salabaccha and Cynna were two famous courtezans of the day. Persons of their description were not unfrequently introduced on the Grecian stage ; and if the letters of Alciphron (by whomsoever written) may be considered as a correct picture of Athenian manners, authors frequently took this method of revenging the private affronts, which they might happen to have received from them. *Epist. Alciphronis. v. i. Epist. 29.*

‡ The nature of the establishment called the Prytaneum, or Hall of public banquets, has been explained already.

§ La nature avoit doué les Athéniens d'une grande subtilité dans les organes optiques ; et en

Further, sirs, may the knife make a push at my life,
 and for cheese may the *salad receive me,
 To my own flesh-hook hung, may men force me along,
 and nought but the †church-yard relieve me.

Cl. (to Demus.) For service and zeal I to facts, sir, appeal :—
 say of all that e'er sway'd this proud city,
 Who had ever more skill your snug coffer to fill,
 undisturb'd by respectance or pity?
 For one and for two I've the rope and the screw,
 to a third I make soft supplication;
 And I spurn at all ties, and all laws I despise,
 so that Demus find gratification.

Saus. Mere smoke this and dust! Demus, take it on trust,
 that my service and zeal can run faster:
 I am he that can steal at the mouth a man's meal,
 and set it before my own master.
 Other proofs than of love in this knave's grate and stove,
 noble lord, may your eyes be discerning:

eux la force intuitive étoit telle, que jamais notre vue ne sauroit atteindre au point d'éloignement où la leur s'étendoit. Du promontoire de Sunium, dit Pausanias, ils distinguent jusqu'au plumage du casque et jusqu'au sommet de la pique dont on a armé une statue colossale de Minerve, placée dans la citadelle d'Athènes. Cependant cette distance est tout au moins en ligne droite de dix

lieues de France. De Pauw. t. i. p. 109.

* The composition of an Athenian salad will be explained in the comedy of the Peace.

† In the original *Cerameicus*. Duo Athenis fuerunt loci hœc nomine, alter celebris propter sepulchra bene meritorum de republicâ; alter propter habitationem meretricum. Beckii Comment.

There the coal and the *fuel that should warm your own gruel,
to your slave's ease and comfort are burning.
Nay, since Marathon's day, when thy sword (*to Demus*) pav'd the way
to Persia's disgrace and declension,
(That bountiful mint in which †bards without stint
fashion words of six-footed dimension)
Like a stone or a stock, hast not sat on a ‡rock,
cold, comfortless, bare and derided :—
While this chief of the land never yet to your hand
a cushion or seat hath provided?

* Lucian, who had always his eye upon Aristophanes, taunts the Rhetoricians in the same way that his master does the poets. See that admirable piece of humour, the *Rhetorum Præceptor*, Luc. v. vii. p. 238. Bipont. edit. The Athenians being at once metallurgists and navigators, the consumption of wood was necessarily great, and the article itself consequently very dear.

† Not only bards, however, and orators swore by the battles of Marathon and Salamis, but the very cooks embellished their diction by the same appeal. Vid. *Athen.* l. ix. p. 380. The battles of Marathon and Salamis have been attended with consequences of too much importance to society, to admit of

their being made a subject even of momentary pleasantry; but it may be permitted to remark, that they are not without their merit to the classical reader in furnishing some variety to those topics of Athenian eulogy,—the battle with the Amazons—the war for the recovery of the dead bodies at Thebes—and the services to the Heracleidæ, which so perpetually recur in the Attic writers. See among other pieces of antiquity the Funeral Orations of Lysias and Plato, and the speech of Isocrates, called the *Panegyrica*.

‡ An allusion to the stones, with which the Pnyx, the usual place of meeting for the General Assembly, was crowded.

But take this (*giving a cushion*) to the ease of your hams and your knees:

for since Salamis' proud day of story,

With a fleet ruin-hurl'd, they took rank in the world,

and should seat them in comfort and glory.

Dem. What vision art thou! let me read on thy brow,

what lineage and kindred have won thee!

Thou wast born for my weal, and the impress and seal

of Harmodius are surely upon thee.

Cleon (mortified.) O feat easy done! and is Demus thus won

by diminutive gifts and oblations?

Saus. Small my baits I allow, but in size they outgo

your own little douceurs and donations.

Cl. (fiercely.) Small or great be my bait, ne'er my boast I abate,

but for proof head and shoulders I offer,

That in act and in will to Demus here still

a love unexampled I proffer.

Saus. (dactyls.) You proffer love indeed! you that have seen him bleed,

buffing and roughing it years twice four;

A tub-and-cask *tenant,—vulture-lodg'd—sixth-floor man;

batter'd and tatter'd, and bruis'd and sore!

There was he pent and sheut with a most vile intent,

his milk and honey sweet from him to squeeze;

* The poet in the strongest manner paints the miserable accommodation, provided for the numbers of country people, whom the policy of Pericles had obliged

to take up their residence in the capital. The preceding line applies to the number of years which the Peloponnesian war had now lasted.

Fifty none e'er he won, tho' the smoke pinch'd his eyes,
and his sweet wine it was drawn to the lees.

When Archeptolemus lately brought *PEACE to us ;
who but you (*to Cleon*) scatter'd and scar'd the virgin,

While your foot rudely plac'd, where Honour's soul is cas'd,
spurn'd at all such as acceptance were urging?

Cl. (fawning.) And, my good sir, the cause?—Marry that Demus' laws
Greece universal might obey:

Oracles here have I, and they in verity
bear that this lord of our's must hold sway,

Judging in †Arcady, and for his salary,
earning him easily a five-obol coin.

Let him but wait his fate; and in mean time his state,
food and support shall be care of mine.

[that way :

Saus. (contemptuously.) Arcady, fee and sway! look'd not your thoughts
donative, gift and bribe, these were your aim :

War is your hood-wink wherein Demus' senses sink,
'till to your hand he crouch trembling and-tame.

But let him once again unto his field and plain,
Peace, in thy arms, sweetest maiden, be borne ;

Let him but play the guest with olives newly preast,
and hold a tête-à-tête with green corn ;

* Thuc. l. iv. cc. 17—22.

† Arcadia, as the central province of Peloponnesus, is here put for the whole of that peninsula. Cleon's oracles therefore promised

all that was most agreeable to Athenian imagination: extended dominion, judicial employment, and extraordinary pay.

Straight he will learn and know, who 'tis hath work'd him woe,
that his own bribery might have sway:

Then from his rustic home, like salvage man he'll come,
turning up *sea-shells along his way.

(*To Cleon.*) You well advis'd of this, no fav'ring moment miss
wild dreams and oracles ever to proffer—

Cl. (interrupting.) This to me?—and from thee?—O matchless villainy!
calumnies thus 'gainst a statesman to offer,

Who blessings rich and great, on this our town and state,
ever is careful to heap and to pour;

Noble Themistocles, Ceres can witness it,
in his prosperity never heap'd more.

Saus. Hear him, ye starry spheres! earth and sea lend your ears!
he to compare with our patriot of yore,

Who found our city trim, full to the lip and brim,
yet made her liquor-cup run all o'er!

When she had din'd and supp'd, his bounty serv'd her up,
as a dessert, the †Peiræus rare;

New fish still dealing her, without curtailing her,
O matchless caterer! her old bill of fare.

But 'neath your rule our town totters and tumbles down,
dwarf'd and curtail'd in her members fair;

* An allusion to the shells, securing the famous harbour of
which were used in the courts of Peiræus by long walls is too well
justice. known to need a further explanation.

† The policy of Themistocles in

With walls she's over-run, with prophecies undone ;
 yet with Themistocles dare you compare !
 He, sooth, his country fled—while you on *cates are fed,
 on rich conserves, and on cakes of the best !
Cleon. Demus, I make appeal—must I this tempest feel,
 Thus for my love to you harass'd and prest ?

But the reign of favouritism is beginning to be at an end.
 The light is let in upon Demus, and conscious that he has
 been cheated long enough, he desires Cleon to forbear his
 railleries. The sausage-vender follows up his incipient
 triumph.

Saus. Mark him, Demus, mark and see
 Triple dye of knavery !
 When your senses wander wide ;—
 Lost in ignorance and pride,—
 This the man on whom to fix
 Half a score of dirty tricks.
 All that form'd your daintiest treat
 And your banquet's sav'riest meat—
 Petty plunder—sweet douceur,—
 Compromise and bargain sure—

*. The *placentæ Achilleæ*, mentioned in the text as the chief article of Cleon's diet, were made of a particular sort of barley, which,

according to Lucian, had the singular virtue of augmenting the faculty of intuition and the subtilty of the optic organs.

Symbol of mere deglutition,
 He sucks all at competition—
 Fibre, tendril, root and branch,
 Nought escapes his grinders staunch;
 But with either hand a scoop,
 All is gone at one fell swoop.

The boisterous answers, which Cleon makes to these and some similar charges, are ridiculed by two powerful Greek words, which compare them to "beating the sea, and making a flouncing noise with the broad part of an oar:" while the attacks awaken the poetical powers and congratulations of the friendly CHORUS.

CHO. Star of salvation, through the night to darkling man appearing,
 Now blessed be that fruitful tongue and port of mighty daring.
 Pursue thy course, and thou, perforce, o'er Greece and this our nation,
 Wilt hold high state and shine elate in most exalted station.
 A three-fork'd sceptre in thy hand, large wealth wilt thou be making,
 Rending and blending all at will—confounding,—stirring,—shaking.
 Your rival noos'd—beware he's loos'd—keep sturdy grasp and tension:
 Small task I ask from bulk like thine and sides of such dimension.

Cleon however had been too long in office, and knew too well the sweets of power, to be dispossessed very easily: and one source of security particularly remained to him:—

let affairs come to the worst, he can "stop the mouths" of his most violent enemies, while one of those shields remained, which he had taken from the enemy at Pylus. But the ingenuity of his rival finds a topic of accusation and complaint against him even on that subject, which in his own imagination formed his most brilliant achievement. In the pride of conquest, Cleon had hung up the shields of the captured Spartans as a trophy in the temple of the gods. The laws of Athens required, that all offerings of this nature should first be mutilated or dispossessed of whatever could afterwards make them serviceable for profane uses. In neglect of this ordinance, Cleon had suspended his shields, without previously dispossessing them of their handles. The sausage-vender therefore does not merely use the language of metaphor, when hearing his rival talk of these shields, he bids him stop, and tells him he has "a handle against himself." He draws perhaps upon his own ingenuity, when he endeavours to persuade Demus, that this omission was not a mere act of forgetfulness in Cleon, but that it proceeded from a settled and premeditated purpose, that in case he found his master "roaring and looking the *ostracism at him," he might have a resource wherewith

* Of the nature of this punishment more will be said hereafter: one nearly similar exists in the despotie empire of China, where the

Emperor is as jealous of his authority, as the sovereign people of Athens were of their supreme dominion. It is enacted in the penal

“to arm all the tanners, cheesemongers, and venders of honey in the town, and then seize upon the granaries.” The imagination of Demus is presently occupied with this narration, and he exclaims in an accent of terror and dismay at the de-celts which were practised upon him. Cleon endeavours to reassure him—and particularly boasts of his talent in keeping down cabals, and of his readiness at giving tongue, when a conspiracy is on foot. “Like enough,” says his persevering rival: “conspiracy is to you, what troubled water is to those who fish for eels. When the lake is still, their labour goes for nothing; when the mud is well stirred, they take eels in plenty. It is the same case between our city and yourself. But tell me,” he continues, “you deal in leather, and you profess a great affection for Demus: did you ever, in the plenitude of your love, make him your debtor for a pair of shoes?” “That I’ll be sworn he did not,” says the old gentleman. The sausage-vender follows

code of China, that if any officer belonging to any of the departments of government, or any private individual, shall address the Emperor *in praise of the virtues, abilities, or successful administration, of any of his Majesty’s confidential ministers of state*, it is to be considered as an evidence of a treasonable conspiracy subversive of government, and shall therefore be investigated with the utmost

strictness and accuracy: the cause and origin of these interested praises of persons high in rank and office being traced, the offending party shall suffer death, by being beheaded, after remaining in prison the usual period. His wives and children shall become slaves, and his property shall be confiscated.—Ta Tsing Leu Lee, &c. by Sir George Staunton.

up his blow by instantly presenting a pair. Demus is all gratitude—he declares that himself, the republic, and his toes never had so sincere a friend. These kind affections are still further improved by the present of one of those mantles which had double sleeves hanging down from the shoulder-blade. “Themistocles himself,” says Demus, in a transport of gratitude, “never struck upon a brighter thought than this: his fortifications in the Peiræus were a brilliant invention; but this far surpasses it!” Cleon reproaches his adversary with his servile flattery: “I have but borrowed your own manners,” replies his opponent: “I am like our Athenians, who having drunk freely at an entertainment, and finding it necessary to retire for a moment, use their neighbours *slippers instead of their own.” Cleon now finds it necessary to open his purse-strings, and he makes a present of a robe—but the old gentleman’s nose grows delicate, and he complains bitterly of a smell of leather. The rival courtier improves the hint. “Do you remember, sir, when †silphium-spice was sold so

* It appears to have been a custom among the Greeks, to leave their slippers in an antichamber when they went to an entertainment.

† The silphium, or herb Benjamin, was much used by the ancients in medicine. It was brought

chiefly from the country of Cyrene, and was held in such high veneration, that a leaf of it was suspended in the Temple of Apollo. Cleon, it appears, had provided that this valuable herb should be brought in great quantities to Athens; and for this he deserved

cheap?" "I do," says Demus. "It was all this man's doing, he thought the low price would tempt you to a purchase: then, says he, when my masters sit in the Courts of Justice, they will poison each other with their own effluvia." More humour of this kind follows, till Cleon, vexed at his adversary's success, who sounds indeed the very bass-string of humility to gain the ascendancy over Demus, threatens him with some of those vexatious proceedings, which, by the peculiar nature of the Attic constitution, a man, high in office, could so easily employ to harass those who had incurred his displeasure.

For this, friend, it shall be thy fate

To fit a *vessel for the state;

commendation. It was the poet's purpose however to put an unfavourable, or at least a ridiculous construction on all his actions.

* For the Athenian fleet, the state furnished only the ship and the crew; all the other expenses fell upon the rich citizens, who, when appointed to this office, took the name of *Trierarcs*. Thus, under democracy, as Mr. Mitford observes, no man was master of his own: property, person, every thing must be devoted, not to the service only, but to the pleasure

and fancy of the people. The wealthy were not allowed the choice of leaving Attica, and the constitution positively denied them the choice of quiet there. To execute the duties of magistracy, *to equip a ship of war*, to preside at a public feast, to direct a dramatic entertainment, and to furnish the whole cost, were equally required of all supposed of competent estate.

"The spirit of tyranny," continues the historian, "inherent in the Athenian constitution, and the

And still the more to drain thy purse,
A leaky skiff shall be thy curse.

disregard, upon principle, for property and the convenience and satisfaction of individuals, are very strikingly marked in a regulation which we find had the force of law. When an expensive office, and particularly when the equipment of a trireme (as the larger vessels of war were termed) was assessed on any one, he might, for the time, avoid the burthen by indicating a richer man; and if the superior wealth were denied, offering to exchange estates. The person so challenged had no alternative but to take upon himself the office, or accept the exchange. The satisfaction thus of an Englishman, in considering his house and his field, more securely his own under the protection of the law, than a castle defended by its garrison, or a

kingdom by its armies, was unknown in Attica. It was as dangerous to be rich under the Athenian democracy as under the Turkish despotism; the same subtuges were used to conceal wealth; the same bribery and flattery to preserve it; with this difference principally, that, in Athens, the flattery was grosser, in proportion to the low condition of the flattered and their multitude; which so divided the shame, that, equally in receiving adulation and committing iniquity, no man blushed for himself." *Hist. of Greece.*

To the sentiments thus forcibly and justly expressed, the following lines from the *Miles* of Antiphanes can add little weight, but as they shew the feelings of the Athenians themselves on the hardships to which this note refers.

O, what a fool is he,

Who dreams about stability, or thinks,
Good easy dolt! that aught in life's secure!
Security!—either a loan is ask'd;
Then house and all that it contains are gone
At one fell sweep—or you've a suit to meet,
And Law and Ruin ever are twin-brothers.—
Art nam'd to a general's post? fines, penalties,
And debts upon the heels of office follow.

With all the never-ending cares
 Of pitching, tarring and repairs,—
 Crazy in bottom, front and tail,—
 A tott'ring mast—a rotten sail.

CHO. (*to Cleon.*) Abate your threats—restrain your
 ire;

There's too much wood upon the fire.
 Forbear, great man of words: no more:
 For see your vessel's boiling o'er.

Cleon. With tribute, tax and fine oppress'd,
 You'll find this quarrel, friend, no jest.
 This moment I my journey hold
 To have you with the rich enroll'd.

Saus. (*solemnly.*) All threat I forbear,
 Or the menaced might rue it:

Do the stage-charges fall upon you? good:
 The Chorus must go clad in spangled robes,
 Yourself may pace in rags. Far happier he
 Who's nam'd a trierarc:—he buys a halter
 And wisely balks at once th' expensive office.—
 Sleeping or waking,—on the sea or land—
 Among your menials or before your foes,
 Danger and Insecurity are with you.
 The very table, charg'd with viands, is
 Mere mock'ry oft;—gives promise to the eye,
 And breaks it to the lip. Is there nought safe then?
 Yes, by the gods,—that which has pass'd the teeth,
 And is in state of deglutition—reckon
 Yourself secure of that and that alone:—
 All else is fleet, precarious, insecure.

But I have a prayer,
 And the gods see me through it.—
(speaking rapidly) May a pan of sleeve fish,
 Hot as fancy could wish,
 Before you take station
 Some day, when oration
 In Miletus' aid
 You're preparing to hold ;—
 The price of your labour
 A talent of *gold.
 The fish quite in prime,
 And your appetite loose,
 Yet wishing in time
 To be down at the House ;
 While your lips are preparing
 The feast to begin,
 With a summons appearing,
 Steps a messenger in ;
 You resolv'd to decline
 Neither wages nor feast,

* Fees and benevolencies of this kind were frequently given to the public orators at Athens by foreign states, in order to keep them in their interest. We learn through Æschines (*Oratio de Coronâ*) that a yearly sum of sixty pounds was to be received by Demosthenes from the Amphissians, as a compensation for his support of their cause at Athens.

To your mouth straight consign
Half a score at the least—
Your throat it takes umbrage
At so much stor'd within it;
You choke—give a gasp,—
And are gone in a minute.

This imprecation, for which the sausage-vender appears to have summoned all his powers, is much to the taste of the CHORUS: and that moral body swear by Jupiter, by Apollo, and by Ceres, a triple oath which the last invocation rendered most confirmatory, that the sausage-vender had spoken nothing but what had their commendation. Demus himself is roused, and breaks out into an eulogium; but panegyric was unusual to him, and even his praise is coupled with a sarcasm.

Demus. I have observed this man: he wears a show
Of honesty, more than I ever saw
In those who go for many to the *penny.
In sooth I love the man—for you, fine Paphlagonian,
Who hold such large professions of your love,
Know that you've anger'd me beyond all suff'rance;

* Demus alludes to the obol, the usual compensation for services among the Athenians.

And are dismiss'd:—I ask your *ring of office. (*Cleon gives his ring.*)

(*To Saus.*) To you and to your care I do commend it.

Cleon. One word at parting—I have left your service—
Who follows me, believe, will prove a †knave
Still greater than myself.

Dem. (to Cleon.) Why how now, rogue!
This is no ring of mine—it tallies not
With my device, or much my eyes deceive me.

Saus. Allow me, sir—what might be your impression?

Dem. A roasted thrium with thick ‡fat inclosed.

Saus. (looking at the ring.) I see no thrium.

Dem. What the impression then?

Saus. A wide-mouth'd gull—high seated on a rock,
In act to make a speech.

Dem. Me miserable!

* This ring may be considered as equivalent to our Great Seal. The direction of public affairs was chiefly entrusted to the confidential person who held it; the Archons, the ostensible magistrates of Athens, possessing very little actual power. The engravers of seals, who must have formed a considerable body in Athens, were forbidden by law, to keep an impression of any seal which they had cut, in their shops, to prevent

the frauds which might arise from counterfeiting the seals of private individuals.

† This was a dreary prospect for the Athenians, and a keen sarcasm on her public men.

‡ The nature of the *thrimum* has been explained in the *Acharnians*. The Greek word *Demos*, with a variation of accent, signified "*obesity*," as well as "*the people*." The allusion is evident.

Saus. What ails you, sir?

Dem.

Away with it—it is

No seal of mine—Cleonymus may own it,

It is his property. Take this, (*giving another ring to*

Saus.) and be

Therewith invested with supreme command

And sov'reignty o'er this my house and treasury.

Cleon. One word—upon my knees—I have some oracles—

Make your ear partner to them, ere you pass

Your last resolve.

Saus.

I too have oracles,

That claim a hearing.

Cleon (to Demus, shewing him an oracle.) Sir, 'tis worded
here,

A time shall come, when crown'd with blooming roses

Demus shall sway the universal world.

Saus. 'Tis worded, sir, in mine, that, deck'd in purple,—

A crown upon his head, and charioted

In golden car,—Demus—in all the pomp

And circumstance of mighty majesty—

Shall hold pursuit—of Thracian **Smicythes*—

And her fair lord.

* The humor of this passage, such as it is, must be sacrificed to the explanation. When a married woman was cited to appear before

a magistrate at Athens, her husband was also summoned in this form, *en dem au en upon*, i. e. such a woman and her lord; because wives

Cleon. Produce your oracles.

Saus. I wait no second bidding.

Dem. (to Cleon.) Let the same

Be done by you—

Cleon. Your bidding is obeyed—

I go.—(*hurrying off.*)

Saus. I vanish.—

A short intermede relieves the time, while the two disputants are absent fetching their oracles. It is scarcely susceptible of translation; the reader's indulgence is desired for the following attempt.—In the education of Athenian youth, the science of music formed a prominent part; and the Greek music, it has been already observed, was intimately connected with the principles of grammar. The CHORUS allege it to have been a complaint of Cleon's tutor on the harp, that his pupil could apply himself to nothing but the *Doric* measure in music: the double powers of the language thus enabling them to raise a smile at Cleon's bribery and love of presents.

being under the government of their husbands, were not permitted to appear in any courts without them. Hence the allusion.—Smycythes was a king of Thrace: the poet, falling in with that particular law-term in the text, by which a summons was issued, contrives to raise a laugh at the effeminacy of Smycythes, as if he had been the lady, instead of the gentleman;—a mistake which the feminine termination of his name favoured.

CHORUS.

That day of all shall break most grateful
 To this and future generations ;
 When death shall take our chief most hateful,
 And Cleon end his usurpations.
 Yet in the *Deigma many a day,
 I hear our crabbed elders say,
 With face where age and verjuice play
 And wrestle ;

That Cleon state and grandeur losing,
 Our town two weapons were misusing,
 Of use for gath'ring and for bruising,
 To wit, a scoop and pestle.

* The Deigma was situated in the Peiræus and answered to the modern 'Change. Here were to be seen strangers, arriving from all the nations situated on the shores of the Mediterranean and the Euxine seas ; and as if to prove that the arts more particularly flourish under the patronage of commerce, no part of Athens was more crowded with pictures and statues. None of the Athenians, according to Aristotle, were so distinguished for their urbanity and politeness as the inhabitants of the Peiræus ; it is there accordingly that Plato has laid the scene of some of his most beautiful dialogues. It was among the merchants, the bankers, and the ship-masters at the Peiræus, that the great orator Demosthenes acquired his extensive knowledge of maritime usury, naval contracts, and those remarkable subtleties which the Greeks displayed in their commercial transactions. De Pauw, t. i. 72. 208. ii. 20.

That hands like Cleon's, richly gifted,
To compass any depths should fail,
Is what with wonder most uplifted
I hear, and scarce believe the tale.
And yet his schoolmates still admire,
What sounds broke from his infant lyre,
And still they tell how stung with ire,
And rage plethoric,

The master-lutist spurn'd his fee,
And chid his pupil bitterly,
"Avaunt that harp! whose only key
Is tuned to the Doric."

The Third Act is much calculated to try the unclassical reader's patience; a few omissions have been made in it, that the task might be rendered as light as possible.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

CLEON, SAUSAGE-SELLER, DEMUS, CHORUS.

Cleon (to Demus.) You see, sir, what I *bear, yet forms
not this

The whole.

Saus. (to Demus.) I am a thaw—a dissolution—
My back runs oceans, with the weight of pressure;
Yet sum not these the half.

Dem. What may you bear?

Cleon. Predictions—oracles.

Dem. What all?

Cleon. Now you
Admire—and yet a chest possest entire
Is left behind!

Saus. I have a †garret stor'd
With them, and eke two dwelling-chambers whole.

* The two candidates for the favour of Demus enter, labouring under a weight of oracles.

† The modern Greeks, (says Athenæus, lib. ii. p. 57.) used

irigou in the same sense that the earlier Greeks used *la*: which signified the upper part of the house, and also an egg. Clearchus says, that the story of the beautiful

Dem. And who has worded these?

Cleon. Mine come from Bacis.

Dem. (to *Saus.*) And your's?

Saus. From Glanis, sir, his elder brother.

Dem. And what may they relate to?

Cleon. They relate

To Athens and to Pylus—to yourself—

To me—to ev'ry thing.

Dem. (to *Saus.*) And your's?

Saus. Mine tell

Of Athens' blooming town, and paltry lentils;—

Of Lacedæmon and of dainty mackarel;—

They speak of men, who play the subtle trickster,

As they mete corn at Market.—They relate

To you and me—(to *Cleon*) for thee, knave, hang thyself.

Dem. Now mould them for my ears, and see you read

That first, which prophesies my after-glory,

How I shall lift me in the clouds *an eagle!

My love is link'd most strangely to that prophecy!

Helen having been born from an egg was derived from her having occupied an apartment thus situated.

* Aristophanes mentions this old oracle, so gratifying to Athenian pride and love of dominion, in two or three of his comedies. The powers of the German language enable Wieland to give it in the

very words and metre of the original.

Glückliche Stadt der Athene, der
Siegverleihenden Göttin,
Vieles hast du gesehn, viel gedaldet,
viel gearbeitet,
Aber du wirst auch dafür ein Adler
in Wolken auf immer.

It was in the spirit of this lust for

Cleon. It shall be done, sir,—list.

(Reads) “Predictions are come from Apollo’s blest shrine :

Let the son of *Erectheus their import divine.

A dog is about him, that’s mighty to bark ;

His wit is from heaven, his tooth from a shark.

Pay and gift he’ll provide, if well guarded his days;—

But ravens croak hoarsely, and daws clamour raise.”

Dem. This lies beyond my reach : I marvel much

Why dogs and jack-daws couple with Erectheus.

Cleon. The dog, sir, points to me ; who else keeps watch

And barks ? Apollo bids that you preserve

Your dog.

Saus. Build not the faith of oracles

On him : he knows them, mighty sir, dog-fashion ;

And bites them like a cur, that gnaws the post

He’s tied to : I have here a prophecy

That speaks (and it’s words bear the stamp of truth)

Respecting this same dog.

universal empire, that this ambitious republic exacted an oath of all her young men, when they entered the military service, that they would improve the dominions of Athens to the utmost of their abilities, “ while there were vineyards and olive trees without its limits.” The pleasantry of making

Cleon engage to recite this favorite prediction and then putting one, which relates solely to his own interest, into his mouth, will not escape the reader.

* Erectheus is most probably known to the reader, as an ancient king of Athens.

Dem.

Out with it straight:

I'll look me out a trusty stone mean time,

Lest this dog-oracle should give a gripe.

Saus. (reads) "Erectheus' great son, let thy thoughts
musing dwell

On the slave-dealing dog, that fit tenant for Hell.

He fawns as you sup; but your eye once away,

He darts on your bread, and your fish is his prey.

The *kitchen and pantry at night see his tricks,

And a plate, or an island, is gone, where he licks."

Dem. Success to Glanis: trust me, he speaks most
Unto the purpose.

Cleon.

Dearest Demus—hear

Again, then judge between us:

(Reads.) "In Athens the sacred, a cry's heard for help:

A woman's in labour;—a lion her whelp.

For warfare he's born, and will fight by the great

With the ants and the gnats, and the vermin of state.

On Gratitude rests it this guard to environ

With a wall of stout wood, and a turret of iron."

Dem. Dost reach him? *(turning to the Sausage-seller.)*

Saus.

Sir, not I.

* By the kitchen is meant the surprise, which so often meet us in
Prytaneum: in the following line Aristophanes.
occurs one of those pleasantries by

It's knowledge is various, it's foot swift and sure,
And it's gripe, aim'd in secret, leaves nothing secure."—
Dost comprehend?

Dem.

No further, friend, than this :

That your fox-dog must mean Philostratus :

None couples the two species sure but he.

Saus. You're vicious in your guess. The oracle
Enjoins you grant no *tribute-gath'ring ships,
Nor heed the Paphlagonian's suit for them.

* The tribute-gathering business, as Mr. Mitford calls it, is one of the most disgusting pictures, among the many which Athenian history presents to us. The words of Phocion, when sent upon this odious employment, are too well known to need mentioning; but Phocion in this, as in other matters, stood single among his countrymen. The commander of the tribute-gathering fleet, says the English historian of Greece, made his own terms with all the numerous maritime states of the shores of the Ægean. Paying him as he required, they were to have protection for their commerce: not so paying, they would be open to depredation from pirates, especially the greatest of pirates, the commander of the Athenian fleet. The peculation was reduced to a sys-

tem. Every man in the fleet, according to his rank, had regularly his share. The treasury profited little: but every individual seaman being interested in the corruption, and the fleet being a large part of the commonwealth, not only to bring any to punishment was seldom possible, but the peculator, through the interest he acquired by allowing a share in the peculation, was generally safer than the honest commander, who would dare to deny to those under him the wages of corruption. Hist. of Greece, v. vii. 376. A valuable passage from the speech of Demosthenes de Chers. translated by the same author, admirably confirms this statement. "In this dilemma of the republic," says the orator, "I must speak openly: and at all risk for the consequences, I will assure

Dem. Why calls the oracle a vessel fox-dog?

Saus. With reason good : a ship is swift, and what
Is swifter than a dog?

Dem. Why join the names
Of fox and dog?

Saus. To part them were to separate
The ships and those they carry in them—sir—
Our soldiers are the foxes, witness many
A town whose grapes have feasted them.

Dem. The oracle
Is right—but, friend—money runs short, and foxes
Abound—how satisfy them all?

Saus. Rest that
With me: a three days pay shall be allowed them.
(*Reads.*) But another prediction awaits my lord's ear ;
'Tis Phœbus that warns—' of *Cyllene beware.'

you, that no naval commander ever sails from your harbours, but he receives presents. They come from the Chians, the Erythræans, all the commercial states likely to be within reach of your fleets: I mean however the Asiatic only. If he has but one or two ships under his orders, he has something: if his force is greater, he has more in proportion. The pretence of these presents is good-will to the commander: under that title they are offered. But those states you

may be sure, none of them give this money for nothing: they pay for the safety of their commerce; that their ships may be, not plundered, but protected." v. viii. 327. The infamous Chares, the unworthy associate of Demosthenes, was supposed to have raised, in the course of his various commands, no less than 1500 talents, near 300,000*l.* which he distributed among his favourite officers and supporting orators.

* Cyllene was a city of Arcadia: a Greek word of similar sound

Dem. Cyllene, Cyllene, (to *Saus.*) how this understand?

Saus. Cyllene is lameness, and means a maim'd hand.

To Cleon's apply it ;—as with bruise or with maim—

Still 'tis bent with—"Your honour, drop gift in the same."

Cleon. You are wrong; when maim'd hands are the point
in dispute,

Diopethes knows best how to settle the suit.

But enough—I've an oracle yet to declare,

It comes from the clouds and is borne on the air.

(To *Demus*) Like an eagle, it tells, you shall spread your
wide wings,

A lord over monarchs, a king over kings.

Saus. (eagerly.) I've the same; while a clause supple-
mental extends

Your reign to the Red Sea, and earth's *farthest ends;

With a seat on the bench in remote Ecbatane,

And a banquet of sweets, while the suits are in train.

Cleon. I have seen me a vision; I've dream'd me a dream:
It's author was Pallas, and Demus it's theme:

signifies a lamed hand. The poet is preparing a blow at Cleon's corruption and love of bribes: the blow is also made to fall upon Diopethes, whose hand appears to have been maimed in some discreditable exploit.

* An allusion has already been made to a singular oath, which was taken by the young men of Athens,

before they went upon an expedition. It was taken in the temple of Agraulos, and implied, that they would consider wheat and barley, and vines and olives to be the limits of Attica; by which, says Plutarch, they were taught to claim a title to all lands that were manured and fruitful. Life of Alcibiades.

The cup **arytana* blaz'd wide in her hand,
And plenty and riches fell wide o'er the land.

Saus. I too have my visions and dreams of the night:
Our Lady and *†owl* stood confest to my sight:
From the cup *‡aryballus* choice blessings she threw,
On him (*turning to Cleon*) fell tan-pickle, and nectar on you
(*to Demus*).

* The *arytana* was a sort of cup or vessel used to draw water with.

† A gentleman who can bring the most profound erudition to the aid of his researches, has remarked that the owl was very properly made the symbol of Minerva, (the pure emanation of the divine mind,) as it is a bird which seems to surpass all other creatures in acuteness and refinement of organic perception; its eye being calculated to discern objects which, to all others, are enveloped in darkness; its ear to hear sounds distinctly, when no other can perceive them at all; and its nostrils to discriminate effluvia with such nicety, that it has been deemed prophetic from discovering the putridity of death, even in the first stages of disease. R. P. Knight's Inquiry into the Symbolical Language of Ancient Art and Mythology.

‡ The *aryballus* was a vessel

shaped like a purse, broad at bottom and narrow at top. On the names and properties of Greek vases of every description, the reader may consult the eleventh book of Athenæus. That those beautiful specimens of art, which still excite the utmost admiration, should have been highly prized by a people, whose niceness of organic perception best enabled them to appreciate their merits, forms no subject of wonder; but a smile is excited, when we find that one man (Pytheas of Phigalia) carried his admiration of them so far, as to leave an epitaph for his tomb behind him, (vid. Athen. l. xi. p. 465.) in which it was considered less a point that posterity should be made acquainted with his goodness and his temperance; (virtues which it appears really belonged to him,) than that he died possessed of more vases of every description, than any of his predecessors.

If the reader has been content to follow me through these oracles and predictions, he will probably come to the same conclusion with Demus ; that of the two prophets, Glanis is much the wiser man. One only resource now remained for Cleon. The nation which ranked cookery among the liberal arts, and whose mythical fables sent Hercules to the relief of Prometheus (the emblem of afflicted humanity, according to W. Schlegel) in a wine cup, had other appetites to be gratified besides a love of power and dominion; and Cleon determines to appeal from his master's hopes and fears to the humbler gratifications of his palate. The first attack is made through the medium of barley, and the offer of providing him daily sustenance—but the bare mention of barley is offensive to Demus—he had been deceived enough already on that point by Cleon and *Thuphanes. An offer of prepared wheat does not propitiate him more. The Sausage-vender is both more delicate and profuse : the banquet which he proposes to lay before his master is to consist of little puddings well baked, and broiled fish; and his life, as this aspirant to favour declares, shall be nothing but a scene of mastication. The imagination of Demus begins to open to the flattering prospect.

* Thuphanes, according to the scholiast, was a secretary of Cleon; what particular transaction is here alluded to, the scholiast does not mention.

Dem. About it straight then, and—observe—
 Who caters best and offers me most presents,
 To him I give the state and all it's harness.

Cleon (running.) Sayst thou? I'm on my legs, and start
 this instant.

Saus. (running faster.) I've left already longer space
 behind me.

SCENE II.

CHORUS, DEMUS.

CHOR. *Honour, power and high estate,
 Demus, mighty †lord, hast thou!
 To thy sceptre small and great
 In obeisance lowly bow!—
 Yet you're easy to his hand whoever cringes;
 Ev'ry fool you gape upon,
 Ev'ry ‡speech your ear hath won,

* The measure, to which this little dialogue has been adapted, is borrowed from one of those ballads of Campbell's, which make every pulse in his readers beat, and which the maritime Genius of our island seems to have dictated to that admirable poet.

† In the original the term is

tyrant; and very justly: the true Demus of Athens united in himself all the powers of government, legislative, executive, financial and judicial, which, as Montesquieu observes, constitutes the very essence of tyranny. See the Areiopagitic Oration of Isocrates. v. i. p. 288.

‡ This trait in the character of

While your wits move off and on

Their hinges.

Dem. (surlily). Hinges in their teeth, who deem

That Demus is an easy fool;

If he yawn and if he dream,

If he tittle, 'tis by rule;

'Tis his way to keep in pay one knave to ease him;—

Him he keeps for guide and gull,

the Athenian people is painted with admirable force by Thucydides, (Lib. iii. s. 38.) in a passage excellently and closely translated by Hobbes. The sentiments in the original are put into the mouth of Cleon, that the historian, without violating the impartiality which he so strictly observes, may have an opportunity of describing that demagogue indirectly through the speech of his opponent Diodorus.

“It is your custom to be spectators of words and hearers of actions, beholding future actions in the words of them that speak well, as possible to come to pass; and actions already past in the orations of such as make the most of them, and that with such assurance as if what you saw with your eyes were not more certain than what you hear related. You are excellent men for one to deceive with a speech of a new strain, but back-

ward to follow any tried advice: slaves to strange things, contempters of things usual. You would every one chiefly give the best advice, but if you cannot, then you will contradict those that do. You would not be thought to come after with your opinion; but rather if any thing be acutely spoken, to applaud it first, and to appear ready apprehenders of what is spoken, even before it be out; but slow to preconceive the sequel of the same. You would hear, as one may say, somewhat else than what our life is conversant in; and yet you sufficiently understand not that, that is before your eyes. And to speak plainly, overcome with the delight of the ear, you are rather like unto spectators, sitting to hear the contentions of sophists, than to men that deliberate the state of a commonwealth.”

But when once the sponge is full,
 To himself the knave he'll pull,
 And *squeeze him.

CHOR. I can feel, and I commend
 This your wisdom's sign and seal;
 If it own a proper end,
 If with public men you deal,
 As with scape-goat and the land's devoted sinner;
 If you lodge them in the †Pnyx,

* The marks of kindred, which Mr. Mitford (vol. v. p. 22.) notices between the Turkish despotism and the Athenian democracy, are probably founded on this passage of Aristophanes.

† This alludes to a custom practised among the ancients for averting famine, plague, or any epidemic disorder. A man and woman were entertained at the public expense, who might serve upon occasion as expiatory victims, each for his own sex. The ceremony was to march them round the streets to the sound of instruments, to give them a few stripes with rods, and then make them leave the city. Sometimes the unfortunate pair were burnt, and their ashes thrown into the sea. A practice somewhat

similar seems to have prevailed at Arles. "In that part of the town of Arles, called La Roquette," says Mr. Thicknesse, "I was shewn the place where formerly stood an elevated altar, whereon three young citizens were sacrificed annually, and who were fattened at the public expense for a whole year, for that horrid purpose! On the first of May their throats were cut in the presence of a prodigious multitude of people, assembled from all parts; among whom the blood of the victim was thrown, for they weakly imagined that their sins were expiated by this barbarous practice." Thicknesse's Journey, vol. ii. p. 18. See also the French Anacharsis, t. iii. p. 409.

Then when fit occasion pricks,
 On the fattest there you fix
 For a dinner.

Dem. Hear and own, that I have known
 To circumvent when prest;
 Eyes I close and seem to doze,
 But 'tis dog-sleep at the best;
 While the varlets fondly cram I'm heedful:
 For the learned in the law
 Know with *camus I can draw,
 As with probe from throat or maw,
 What's needful.

With this †dialogue ends the third act; if Aristophanes

* The *camus* was a little funnel, through which the dicasts cast into the urns the beans, which were to decide upon the acquittal or condemnation of prisoners.

† The following note is rather longer than has been usually allowed in the present work; but the translator feels that some apology is due for the inadequate manner in which this little dialogue is rendered, and he is happy to do it in the words of a writer who, with talents to which he has no preten-

sions, feels it necessary to make the same excuse, and in part advances the same cause of failure, viz. the difference of language. The note is the more readily inserted, as the reader will perceive that a little use has been made of a small part of it in the preface to this play.

“Ohne mir, wie der mahler in Lessings Emilia Galotti, viel darauf einzubilden, dass ich weiss, was und wie viel von den feinsten Schönheiten, Atticismen, Anspie-

have no other merit, at least it cannot be denied that he thoroughly understood the character and brutal feelings of

lungen, Wendungen, Schattirungen und Druckern des Originals in meiner Kopie verlohren geht, und wie und warum es verlohren geht, verkümmert mir das blossе Gefühl, dass soviel (nicht immer durch meine schuld) verlohren geht und verlohren gehen muss, alle Freude an dem was hie und da vielleicht gelungen ist. Dies ist ganz besonders bey den intermezzen der *Κόμæ* der Fall, die gerade das schönste in diesem Dichter sind. Unlängbar liegt eine der hauptursachen, warum ein Übersetzer des Aristofanes ein so böses spiel hat, in seiner Sprache. Was ich gegeben habe, "steckt dem Dieb die Sonde in Rachen," sagt nicht die hälfte dessen, was der Dichter mit den zwey worten *καμει κατάμυλον* darstellt, und es brauchte, um sie zu erklären, eine lange und tädiose note, die der Griechischgelehrte nicht bedarf, und wobey die andern leser nichts gewannen. Eben so ist es in der ersten strofe des Demos mit dem worte *βρυλλαν* in der Stelle, *αὐτὸς τε γὰρ ἰδοὺς βρυλλαν το καὶ ἡμεραν*, das in den zuhörern sogleich das Bild eines kürzlich gebornen Säuglings erweckte, und so schön dazu hilft,

die dumpfe Behäglichkeit des *divino für niente* auszudrücken. Denn gewiss meynte Aristofanes mehr damit, als *potitare in dict*, oder *gobeleter tous les jours*. Das ganze leben des souveränen volks zu Athen war, so zu sagen, nichts anders als ein immerwährendes nippen und nicken, schnappen, gaffen, aufhorchen, witzeln, necken, hin und herflattern; ein Leben ohne Plan, und ohne zweck, ohne wahre Thätigkeit und ohne wirklichen Genuss, unter ewigem Streben nach heyden, mitten in den Zerstreuungen der albernsten Langeweile, hingeträumt. Hiezu giebt kein anderer Autor so viele und starke Belege als Aristofanes. Freylich war dies nicht immer der Karakter der Bewohner der Minervens stadt gewesen; und man könnte nicht ohne Grund behaupten, dass sie erst durch den vollen Gebrauch ihrer volkssuveränität, unter den heillosen Demagogen, die auf den Perikles folgten, so schlecht geworden, wie sie sich im Verlauf des Peloponnesischen Krieges gezeigt haben, und wie unser Dichter sie in allen seinem Stücken, besonders in diesem und in den WESPEN und VÖGELN

a mob; for an ochlocracy is the same in all countries,---grasping, supercilious, arrogant and overbearing,---winking at iniquities by which themselves are to be profited, and only just because they are selfish.

darstellt. Auch das ist ein Meisterzug im Charakter des Athenischen Severäns, dass DEMOS sich für einen mächtigen Politikus hält, weil er sich von seinem Ministern betrügen und bestehlen lässt um sie hernach wieder ausdrücken zu können.---(Die Ritter des Arist. übersetzt von Wieland.) The allusions, contained in this note, to the delicate beauties of language, Attic spirit, play of words, ingenious turns, and shades of character, exhibited in the original of this truly Aristophanic little dialogue, are such as might be expected from the author of Oberon: his tippling, boozing, muddle-headed, snap-

ping, gaping, jeering, egging, volatile, fluttering DEMOS, who considers it as a master-stroke in politics to let his ministers cheat him and steal, that he may be the gainer by their thefts, presents no trait of character, which the writings of the author whom he translates, do not justify. The reader, who wishes for further classical authority for some of these features of character in the sovereign multitude of Athens, may consult Plato's Apologia, p. 364. (G.) his first Alcibiades, p. 36. (H.) and the eighth book of his Republic, p. 498.---Edit. Mars. Ficini.



ACT IV.

SCENE I.

CLEON, SAUSAGE-VENDER, DEMUS, CHORUS.

Cleon (to Saus.) Off, knave! and feast the *crows.

Saus.

On your own head

Fall the ill wish!

* The crows appear to have been in great disfavour with the Athenians; they had the fee-sim-ple of all that society wished to eject from itself; and thus stood to the Greeks somewhat in the relation of that malignant person, who, according to Rabelais, break-

fasts on the souls of serjeants-at-law fricasseed. The following song will shew, that this dislike to the crow did not prevail universally among the Greeks, but that the same use was made in some parts of the crow, as in others was made of the swallow.

Lords and ladies, for your ear,
We have a petitioner.
Name and lineage would you know?—
'Tis Apollo's child, the crow;
Waiting till your hands dispense
Gift of barley, bread or pence.
Be it but a lump of salt;
His is not the mouth to halt.
Nought that's proffer'd he denies;
Long experience makes him wise.
Who to-day gives salt, he knows,
Next day fig or honey throws.—

Cleon. Demus, I wait a week
With hands prepar'd to show'r my gifts upon you.

Saus. And I a month—a year—a century—
Time out of mind, mind, mind.

Dem. And I wait here
Expecting your large promises, and venting
Curses on both (*mimics*) before creation,—ation—ation.

Saus. (to Demus.) Know'st what to do?

Dem. Your wisdom can advise me.

Open, open gate and door:
Mark! the moment we implore,
Comes the daughter of the squire,
With such figs as wake desire.—
Maiden, for this favour done
May thy fortunes, as they run,
Ever brighten—be thy spouse
Rich and of a noble house;
May thy sire in aged ease
Nurse a boy who calls thee mother;
And his grandam on her knees
Rock a girl who calls him brother;—
Kept as bride in reservation
For some favour'd near relation.—
But enough now: I must tread,
Where my feet and eyes are led;
Dropping at each door a strain,
Let me lose my suit or gain.

Then search, worthy gentles, the cupboard's close nook:
To the lord and still more to the lady we look:
Custom warrants the suit—let it still then bear sway;
And your crow as in duty most bounden shall pray.

Athen. lib. viii. p. 359.

Saus. Start him and me, observe, as from the barriers :
We'll run a race as 'twere, who most can give you.

Dem. 'Tis well advised : one—two—three—away!

Saus. We're gone.

Dem. Run quick.

Cleon, I dare him to outstrip me.

[*Exeunt Cleon and Saus.*]

Dem. (solus.) I must be dainty nice indeed, if such
A pair of lovers do not satisfy me !

Such was the humour of the Old Comedy : it must be confest that we have improved largely both in our notions of wit and humour. The rival candidates now commence their contest of presents—they consist chiefly of culinary articles, and that everlasting dish, the affair at Pylus, is again served up to the worthy Demus, whom the poet seems resolved to satiate with the only exploit which Cleon ever accomplished. There is so much play of words in this short scene, that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to render it satisfactory to the English reader. Aristophanes, like the French Piron, is sometimes a mere machine for throwing out puns, squibs, sarcasms, pleasantries, and plays of words. He is a fire-work discharging the most brilliant scintillations on all sides, but their effect is lost, if analysed or contemplated too curiously. The Sauce-vender has the advantage of his rival for some time

in his presents, till Cleon awakens his fears by talking of a dish of hare, which he has exclusively to present. His rival, disconcerted at first, has recourse to a stratagem. "Some ambassadors come this way to me, and *their purses seem well filled.*" "Where are they?" exclaims Cleon eagerly, and turns about. The hare-flesh was immediately in the hands of his rival, who presents the boasted dainty in his own name to Demus, and *he* of course casts the old affair of Pylus in the disappointed Cleon's teeth.

While the Sausage-vender piously refers the suggestion of this little theft to Minerva, and modestly takes the execution only to himself, Cleon resents the surprize very warmly. "I had all the danger of catching the hare," says he, referring to his predecessor Demosthenes. "And I had all the trouble of dressing it," says his rival. "Fools," says Demus, in the true spirit of Athenian and democratical selfishness, "I care not who caught it, nor who dressed it; all I regard is the hand which serves it up to table." A conscious feeling of inferiority now comes over Cleon, and one of those powerful words, which the Greek language only supplies, expresses his fears, that the race is against him, and that he shall be *distanced* in impudence. His rival proposes a new test of affection. "Let our chests," says he, "be searched. It will then be proved who loves Demus most:" or, in the Sausage-vender's own words, "who is the better man towards Demus and his stomach." This is ac-

cordingly done. That of the new candidate for power is found empty. "He had given dear little Demus every thing." In Cleon's is found abundance of all good things; and a tempting cheesecake particularly excites Demus's surprise. "The rogue!" says this representative of the sovereign multitude, "to conceal such a prodigious cheesecake as this, and to cut me off but a mere morsel of it; and that, too," subjoins the complainant, changing his *dialect for a reason which the learned reader will appreciate, "after I had made him a present of a chaplet, and added many other douceurs besides!" Cleon in vain pleads that he stole for the good of the country. He is ordered to lay down his †chaplet and invest his antagonist with it. Nay, says he, still struggling for the retention of office,

Cleon. I have an oracle,—it came from Phoebus,
And tells to whom Fate wills I yield the mastery.

Saus. Declare the name—my life upon't—the god
Refers to me.‡

* The change is made from the Attic to the *Doric* dialect; and a hearty laugh no doubt accompanied this sudden and significant allusion to the demagogue's corruption and love of presents.

† Cleon, according to the scholiast, had received a chaplet in full assembly from the people; with the

privilege perhaps attached of wearing it on all occasions.

‡ Brumoy observes, that the *anagnosis*, by which Cleon's successor in office is pointed out, is a parody on the well-known scene in the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, where the incestuous parricide is so skilfully brought to light.

Cleon. Presumptuous!—you!—low scoundrel!
To the proof:—where were you school'd, and who the
teacher

That first imbued your infant mind with knowledge?

Saus. The kitchen and the scullery gave me breeding;
And teacher I had none save blows and cuffs.

Cleon (aside). My mind misgives me: what am I deliver'd!
But pass we on: (*aloud*) say further what the *wrestling-
master

Instructed you?

Saus. To steal—to look the injured
Straight in the face, and then forswear the theft.

Cleon (aside). Angels† and ministers of grace protect me!
(*Aloud*) Unclasp what art or trade your manhood practis'd.

Saus. I dealt in sausages.

Cleon. Aught more?

Saus. I found

The bagnios employment.

Cleon (aside). I'm undone.

One only hope remains. (*aloud*) Resolve me—practis'd you
Within the market place, or at the ‡gates?

* The *παιδριβης*, or wrestling-master, succeeded the *γραμματικος* and *μυθικος*.

† *Cleon* parodies the Bellerophon of Euripides.

‡ The lowest tradesmen only

practised at the gates of the town: every answer is made to shew the utter baseness of *Cleon's* rival, and thus to place himself in the most ignominious light.

Saus. Nay, at the gates, among the men who deal
In salted fish,

Cleon.

All is accomplish'd.

It is the will of heav'n :—bear me within :—

A long farewell to all my former greatness!

Adieu,* fair chaplet! 'gainst my will I quit thee,

And give thy matchless sweets to other hands!—

There may be knaves more fortunate than I,

But never shall the world see thief more rascally.

Saus. (devoutly) Thine be the triumph, Jove† Ellanian!

SCENE II.

AGORACRITUS, CHORUS, DEMUS.

CHO.

Joy

And gratulation to our friend; bear he

In mem'ry's tablet, 'tis to us he owes

* Parodied from the description of the dying Alcestes taking leave of her bridal bed.

† Jupiter was worshipped at *Ægina* under this title upon the following occasion. A great drought prevailed in that island, which had nearly brought the people to ruin. By the united prayers of the Pan-

Hellenes (or universal Greeks) to Jupiter, this affliction was removed. It was while making excavations in *Ægina*, in order to ascertain the proportions of the temple of Jupiter Panhellenius, that the pieces of sculpture were dug up, which have so much exercised the ingenuity of the learned.

These proofs of manhood. (*to Agor.*) Worthy sir, I have
 A small request—the place which Phanus holds—
 I am your suitor for the same, and fain
 Would sign your writs.*

Dem. And I have my request—
 How runs your name?

Agor. They call me †Agoracritus,
 And justly; for my livelihood and bread,
 I' the forum have been earn'd by litigation.

* There is something very humorous in this readiness of the CHORUS to make use of their friend's advancement.

† Enough already has been said of the Athenian Agora, to give some idea of what this name is meant to convey. A translation of part of the sixth of Theophrastus's characters will convey the idea still more fully; the author seems to have had the Agoracritus of our author in his eye, when he wrote it. The picture itself is such as a republic only could furnish, and something like a parallel to it might, I believe, be still found in the free states of America. "A man of desperate impudence is one whom it costs nothing to say and to do the most disgraceful actions. He is quick at an oath, has no reputation to lose, and may

be affronted with impunity. For his manners—they are those of a man from the agora; he displays all that others conceal, and in every thing that is done he must have a share. He is of all trades: to-day he keeps a tavern, to-morrow a bagnio, and the next day he has some office in the public farms. There is no occupation of which he thinks the exercise disgraceful. He is alternately a public cryer, a cook, and a gambler. If he have a mother living, he leaves her unsupported; he is dragged through the city by a rope for theft, and he spends more days in the public prison than he does in his own house. This is the man who has always a crowd about him; who calls to every one that passes, addressing them in a loud and hoarse tone, and assailing them with reproaches.

Dem. To Agoracritus I now commit me:
And with myself I give unto his charge
This Paphlagonian here.

Agor. And bravely will I
Maintain thee, Demus—your own lips shall testify,
That you have never seen a better nor
A wiser man in this our town*—Cechenian.

SEMI-CHORUS.†

Where shall praise and commendation
Make their lasting habitation,

He is ever involved in lawsuits, either as defendant or plaintiff: in the former case he excuses his appearance by a false oath, in the latter he appears with his **echinus* in his bosom, and a bundle of forensic papers in his hand. The most remarkable characteristic of his impudence is, that he is at the head of all the petty dealers in the agora—he lends them money upon usury, and receives daily for a drachma three half obols—he frequents the cook-shops, and the stalls where fish, as well salt as fresh, are sold; and the money which he receives on interest he puts into his mouth. Men of this

kind are difficult to deal with: for their mouth easily breaks forth into revilings, and they speak with so loud a voice that the forum and the work-shops ring again with it."

* The audience expected the speaker to say Athenian. The word *Cechenian* means *stupid, gaping*,—easy to be cheated; and applies more particularly to that love of news which distinguished the Athenians in the time of Demosthenes and St. Paul, and which still forms a prominent feature in the character of the modern Athenians.

† The Intermede, which now relieves the action of the play,—

* The *echinus* was a large vessel in which all the papers connected with the future process were deposited.

But with them, whose steeds though spent
 Still are on their topmost bent?—
 In beginning and in ending,
 Muse, then let thy high commending
 With our noble Horsemen rest.

Take no part,
 From mere gaiety of heart,
 'Gainst Lysistratus the supple;
 Nor the smart
 Of satire with Thaumantis couple.
 'Tis a wretch beyond a jest.

With famine and leanness his meals he has made,
 And when Delphi he seeks in the course of his trade,
 And with sighs and with tears the god's favour would win,
 His strength tops the quiver, but fails at the chin.

revolting enough in some of its parts, but curious in all,—shews what a most inquisitorial power the Old Comedy exercised over public and private life in Athens. What the courtesy indeed of modern manners either drops altogether, or mentions only as a misfortune, is by the Greek stage, which was directed entirely to the amelioration or perfection of men gathered into a community, stigmatised almost as an offence. Accordingly the poverty of Lysistratus and Thaumantis, made con-

temptible indeed by other accessories, forms a prelude to the *public mention* and ridicule of crimes which the dramatist brands indeed with the most deserved infamy, but which, for the honour of human nature, will not bear the most distant allusion. The lighter raillery upon the wretched Cleonymus, who is now served up to the public as a parasite, and upon the worthless Hyperbolus, as the author of an obnoxious state measure, can hardly fail to excite a smile.

FULL CHORUS.

Guilty men to taunt with satire is no subject for reproof:
 Sober men the deed will honour;—what if Envy stand aloof?
 A wretch exists,—were common knowledge more familiar with his name,
 I without an innuendo loudly would pronounce the same.
 But obscurity protects him, and Satire, much desiring other,
 Finds no shaft to pierce and wound him, but through his exalted brother.
 Arignotus—(when I name him, none his merit needs to learn,
 Who is master of his gamut, or can black from white discern)
 Shames his fortunes by a brother, pair'd with him in nought but blood,
 Who takes pleasure in his vices as a swine that's wash'd, in mud.
 Were he, sirs, a simple scoundrel, as a cut-purse from the street,
 A suborner or informer, or a bully or a cheat;
 Had he turn'd his mind to filching, or to flattery or praise,
 Or had practis'd oldest vices in the newest kind of ways;
 Verse of mine had never touched him, nor perhaps his name been known,
 But the wretch to old pollutions adda inventions of his own.

In the flow of solemn verse

Here then I pronounce a curse,

And I damn to endless fame

Ariphraides, that thing of shame,

And his deed without a *name;—

}

* Of sinnes heteroclitall, and sinnes should be accounted new
 such as want either name or pre- that so they may be esteemed
 sident, there is oft times a sinne monstrous. Browne on Vulgar
 even in their histories. We desire Errors.
 no recorde of such enormities;

If there be who counter run
 To this honest malison,
 Fellowship with them I'll none :
 I abjure them and resign;
 Nor shall juice of generous wine
 Ever flow in friendly cup
 For our common lips to sup.

}

SEMI-CHORUS.

On my bed and in my play,
 —Much by night and more by day,—
 To myself I talk and say,
 What profession, art, or trade,
 Earns Cleonymus his bread?
 Rumour says, that once within
 A rich man's cupboard, press or bin,
 Pray'r nor tear, nor menace stout,
 Can entice the glutton out.
 Though from his knees the suppliant rise—
 Attest the earth—adjure the skies,
 And beg with deprecating cries
 " King—Emperor—Lord—come forth we pray,
 And grant our board one holiday."

}

}

FULL CHORUS.

Our ships in congress met of late
 For councils grave and sage debate.

f

A frigate well advanced in years
 Rose first and told her secret fears.
 "Sad tidings, ladies, these I hear;—
 Things go but ill in town, I fear.
 A hundred of us—such the tale—
 Must instant to *Chalcedon sail :
 May fiery vengeance blast the brute,
 Hyperbolus†—who urg'd the suit

* The possession of Chalcedon and Byzantium was of the utmost importance to Athens. Both were great objects, for revenue and for commerce; for commerce especially in two principal articles of the Attic market, corn and slaves.

The promontory on which the ancient Chalcedon stood, is, according to Pococke, a very fine situation, being a gentle rising ground from the sea, with which it is almost bounded on three sides; and having further on the east side of it a small river, which falls into the little bay to the south, that seems to have been the port of the Chalcedonians. Chalcedon, therefore, says this writer, would be esteemed a most delightful situation, if Constantinople, which is still more advantageously situated, were not so near it.

† Hyperbolus was a man of

much the same turbulent character as Cleon: he was the friend of that ignorant and overbearing demagogue when living, and the successor to his influence among the lowest of the people. A few years after this comedy was written, Hyperbolus endeavoured to create a variance between Nicias and Alcibiades, and to exercise upon the latter the well-known punishment of ostracism. "His influence," says the English Historian of Greece, (vol. iv. p. 28.) "was such, that it was evidently in his power to decide whether Alcibiades or Nicias should be banished. But he had a politician to encounter such as Cleon never met with. Alcibiades communicated with Nicias; an assembly of the people was held; both collected their strength; and Hyperbolus was named as a person, by his weight,

And carried it!"—The lady spoke,
 And terror seiz'd the maids of oak.—
 " 'Twas past endurance"—" faith and troth."—
 Some fainted—others dropp'd an oath.
 Uprose a sloop, whose maiden breast
 No hand of man had yet comprest,
 And, " Ladies," with a sneer cried she,
 " Such scurvy captains board not me.
 Sooner shall age these timbers eat,
 And give the worms a lasting treat.
 You, ladies, as you please—but I
 This chief of visage sour defy—
 And Spitfire holds me company. }
 Our hearts are strong;—our cause is good;—
 He'll find us, girls, true pitch and wood.—
 For Athens—sure her wits are fled;
 Nor knows she what fits barks well-bred.

influence and seditious designs,
 dangerous to the commonwealth.
 The people were surprised: for no
 man of his mean condition was
 ever before proposed as a subject
 for the ostracism. But the Athe-
 nian people loved a joke; and this
 appeared a good one: they would
 honour him by ranking him with
 Miltiades, Aristoides, Themistocles
 and Cymon. To this whim of a

thoughtless multitude was added
 all the weight of interest of Alci-
 biades and Nicias, and the banish-
 ment of Hyperbolus was decided."
 The Athenians thought the punish-
 ment of ostracism (which some
 writer, I think, has called a tax
 upon virtue) so much disgraced by
 a man like Hyperbolus having been
 subjected to it, that they after-
 wards abolished it.

I move then, till the storm be past,
 By *Theseus' fane we anchor fast,
 Or stretch us for that chapel fair
 Where the *Eumenides hear prayer.
 Never, so help me Jove, shall he
 To mock the town, take charge of me ;
 But rather, when the wind sets fair,
 Feast with his bones the fowls of air,
 Launching the boats, wherein convey'd
 Such wealth and stores of cash he made
 By †candle-wicks and chandlers trade.

* The temples of Theseus and
 the Eumenides were places of re-
 fuge for runaway slaves.

† Hyperbolus is laughed at else-

where as a link-maker. How far
 the poet's satire upon a man's oc-
 cupation is to be extended, has
 been already explained.



ACT V.

SCENE I.

AGORACRITUS, CHORUS.

Agor. A truce to the speech that ill omens would teach,
 reign words of all blest acceptation ;

Affidavits may cease and the courts* all in peace
 slumber quiet without molestation.

Such weak joys are no more—to new blessings we soar,
 and oh! for this blest transformation,

So prosp'rous and new, ring the theatre through
 loud pæans of high gratulation.

CHOR. (*to Agor.*) Thou star wondrous bright, shedding radiance and light,
 to our islands and town beneficial,

Say, what news dost thou note that our streets wide must float
 in †perfume and rites sacrificial?

* We shall have occasion to consider the judicial policy of Athens in the following comedy of the Wasps: in what light it was considered by themselves may be seen by the concluding clause against those who violated the Amphictyonic oath, and which the framers of that oath appear to have considered as all that was horrible: May they never perform a pure

sacrifice to APOLLO, DIANA and MINERVA the provident: *may they be alike unsuccessful in war and lawsuits*, and may their posterity be extirpated from the face of the earth.

† It was the custom, at Athens, on any good news to offer sacrifices to the gods, whose images were placed in the streets.

Agor. Demus, sirs, by my power, is again seen to tower
in the vigour of youth and stern beauty ;

So hard have I toil'd, vapour'd, seeth'd and parboil'd,
and so well has my caldron done duty.

CHOR. And where does he dwell, open further and tell,
thou man of devices victorious ?

Agor. He dwells in the town of the violet-crown,
in Athens the ancient and glorious.

CHOR. His bearing and port deign me next to report,
what dress and costume say have won him ?

Let me hear, sir, and learn, that my eyes meek may turn
views of love and devotion upon him.

Agor. In the garb of past years richly rob'd he appears ;
in those fashions and forms all his pride is,

When he din'd in high state as Miltiades' mate,
And supp'd with the wise Aristides.

But full view you may take—for hark ! the doors creak,
new *visions of glory forth sending ;

Now clap hands and throw out all your soul in a shout
to the honour of Athens ascending.

* W. Schlegel thinks that the scene was here changed, and a view of the magnificent Propylæa substituted in place of the humble dwelling of the allegorical Demus. The same excellent writer, as warm in his feelings as he is correct and universal in his literature, remarks

very justly, that there is something affecting in this triumphal rejoicing, which attends the restoration of Demus to former youth, and dignity of character. Aristophanes was, indeed, *in his way*, a true patriot ; and the man, who fearlessly exposed himself, while he held up

She appears in her praise as the ancient of days,
 the theme and the top of high wonder ;
 Demus' fitmost abode, hymn'd in song and in ode,
 and echoed in peals of deep thunder.

to ridicule two classes of men, whose malignant influence had made this renovation so necessary; viz. the DEMAGOGUES, who abused the public confidence, and the still more pernicious SOPHISTS, who poisoned truth, justice and virtue in their very sources: such a man might be expected to revert with feelings of no ordinary description to that period of his country's history, which, if no other monument remained of it than the noble message recorded in Herodotus, (Calliope. c. vii.) is entitled to a respect, which the age of Pericles, with all its polish and civilization, its poets, its painters, its sculptors, and its men of letters, fails to excite. As the nature of the present work has brought the reader upon a period of Grecian history, which affords few materials for commendation, the translator gladly seizes an opportunity of reverting to a brighter side of the picture, by the insertion of this message, so truly worthy by its noble simplicity of the better times of Greece:—Now the Athenian deputies, in com-

pany with those of Megara and Platæa, came to Lacedæmon, and being introduced to the Ephori, they addressed them thus: We inform you, on the part of the Athenians, that the king of the Medes is ready to restore to us our country, and to make an alliance with us upon fair and equal terms, without fraud and without deceit: he is willing also to give us another country in addition to our own, leaving the choice of such country to ourselves. We, however, out of reverence to the Hellenic Jupiter, and thinking that it would be an atrocious proceeding on our part to prove traitors to Greece, have rejected, instantly rejected, his offers, though the injuries and extreme treachery we have experienced from the Greeks, might have justified us in adopting a different course. We cannot be ignorant that it would be more for our advantage to be on terms of amity with the Persian, than to be the object of his hostility: but to such amity our own choice shall never lead us; we repeat it—never.

CHO. O far-envied town, in whose chaplet and crown
the violets never are blighted,

Athens famous and great, show thy king in his state,
and let Greece own her monarch delighted !

Agor. Splendour-deck'd, and in oils and in essences trick'd,
see he comes and claims deep veneration !

He deigns in his hair the **cicada* to wear,
breathing truce, love, and conciliation.

And thus far, on our part, all behaviour towards the Greeks has been marked with candour and sincerity, &c. Such was the mode of thinking among the Athenians, when that giddy and ill-advised people had just contrived to get rid of their "tyrants;"—those tyrants who, as the impartial Thucydides says, cultivated, in an extreme degree, virtue and wisdom; and the happiness of whose administration is compared by Plato to that of the golden age of Saturn. (Plat. in Hipparcho, S. A.) Whether their modes of thinking were improved by the introduction of republicanism, we leave the readers of Plato and Aristophanes to say.

* The Athenians prided themselves in the idea of being sprung from the earth: and as an emblem of this imaginary generation they had a custom of wearing golden *cicadæ* (generally translated *grass-hoppers*) in their hair. The Arcadians, who boasted that they existed before the moon, advanced their pretence in the same way by wearing moons in their shoes. Plato, whom nothing fanciful in the mythical tales of his countrymen escaped, has prosecuted their claim to antiquity at some length in his amusing little dialogue, called *Critias*.—See also his *Republic*, lib. iii. p. 443. Edit. Mars. Ficini.

SCENE II.

DEMUS, CHORUS, AGORACRITUS.

CHO. Hail, hail to our lord, honour'd, lov'd and ador'd,
through Greece his all-hallow'd dominion !
Transported we bring to the feet of our king
this triumph of public opinion.
To the pleasure and fame of our town and its name
thou hast order'd, decreed and enacted,
Thou hast acted and done, as achievements long won
at Marathon's high field exacted.

Dem. Come hither, Agoracritus—my gratitude
Is tied to thee—such marvellous amendment
Hath this thy boiling wrought.

Agor. O could your eye
Reverted trace your former state, and actions !—
These have not come within your scope of knowledge ;—
Had they—the gratitude would e'en come short,
That rank'd me next the mark of high divinity.

Dem. And what might be this former state ? unbuckle thee
And paint my former self unto me.

Agor. Sir,
Your bidding shall be done. This was your nature :
Did one in the Assembly speak you thus,
(*mimics*) “ Demus, I am your friend—Demus, 'tis you

Alone command* my love—Demus, there's none
But I takes counsel for you"—needed only
A speech and tricky flourishing like this,
And straight your horns were in the air for pride.
And joy unbounded.

Dem. Say, how far'd meantime
The trickster?

Agor. He had gain'd his end and march'd
Away; what should detain him to your uses?

Dem. And did they fool my senses thus?

Agor. Your ears
Meantime went as it were on springs, sir, closing
And opening at will, like some umbrella.

Dem. O that my riper years should see themselves
From wisdom thus divorced! I mourn my folly.

Agor. Put case,—a brace of orators arose,
And one thus utter'd him—" 'Tis fit we mann'd
A fleet"—the other, "Sirs, the judges must not
Curtail them of their fee"—how went the issue?

* There is much humour in this passage, but Arbuthnot has carried the satire much farther. When John Bull arrives at Ecclesdown Castle, he *exacts* from his servants a declaration of their regard for him.

J. B. Are you glad to see your master in Ecclesdown Castle?

All. Yes, indeed, sir.

J. B. Extremely glad?

All. Extremely, sir.

J. B. Swear to me that you are so.

Then they began to damn and sink their souls to the lowest pit of hell, if any person in the world rejoiced more than they did.

Mark! the ship-advocate is quash'd anon—
Look to the fee-commender—he hath gain'd
His cause, and gone about his business presently—
(to Dem.) Well may you shift your ground and hang your ears.

Dem. My cheeks indeed pay shame for such offence
And guilt of former days.

Agor. With you it rests not;
Nor shall you do yourself that wrong to think it:
Their's was the shame, that play'd upon your easiness.
But now put case in after day—good Demus—
Some scoundrel from the bar should thus address you.
“ This culprit must be trounced—I'll have that cause
Nonsuited—let the judges else look to it—
No fee, no bread for them if they refuse.”—
Should one discourse you thus, how shall he fare
With you?

Dem. The *public pit shall be his fate.
Thither shall he be borne—and at his neck
I'll tie Hyperbolus by way of make-weight.

Agor. There is a smack of sense and justice here.
What other measures for the state's good ordinance
Have you devis'd?

• The barathrum is meant here, a deep pit, where criminals were thrown at Athens.

Dem.

Who row our men of war,

Shall win the harbour and full *pay together.

Agor. Many worn †hams will thank you for this grace.

Dem. The list which sees a citizen‡ enroll'd

Shall keep it there : no grace—no innovation.

Agor. This blow will strike Cleonymus' huge buckler.

Dem. I'll have no speeches in the Agora

From those whose chins have not yet budded.

Agor.

Clisthenes,

* Every Athenian was more or less a seaman ; and as the soldier sometimes worked at the oar, so the seaman, upon occasions, served by land. The pay of the seaman, like that of the oplite, was, at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, two drachmæ. (Thuc. l. iii. c. 17.) This was found too much for the public treasury, and a reduction took place. In the expedition against Sicily, the state allowance to the mariners was only one drachma : (Thuc. l. vi. c. 31.) we afterwards find Alcibiades advising Tissaphernes (Thuc. l. viii. c. 45.) that the Athenians gave but half a drachma to their sailors, and recommending him to reduce his allowances to the same sum.

† Les malheureux qui devoient gagner leur vie en servant, dès

l'enfance, sur les flottes de la république, y contractoient, par la manœuvre pénible des rames, un défaut dans la taille auquel on les reconnoissoit parmi les autres habitants de l'Attique. C'étoit une dépression immédiatement au-dessous de la colonne vertébrale, où se fait le plus grand effort des rameurs. Les mythologistes de la Grèce, qui plaisantoient souvent à leur manière, disoient que cette difformité des Athéniens étoit un vice héréditaire, que Thésée leur avoit transmis, après avoir été long temps assis sur la pierre de douleur ; mais cette prétendue pierre de douleur n'étoit dans la réalité que le banc des galériens. De Pauw, t. i. p. 109.

‡ See the comedy of the Peace.

And Straton then must use dispatch, and straight
Look out another school of oratory.

Dem. My meaning rather points to those same sparks,
For ever haunting the perfumers shops,
Who sit and chatter to this tune—"Commend me (*mimicking*)
To *Phæax—swinge me!—'tis a man of parts—
Vers'd in all school-points most divinely—none
Takes firmer hold upon his hearer—split me!—
And then such art in hammering his sentiments,
So clear, so powerful to sway the passions!—

* The inadvertencies of so learned a man as Casaubon are to be mentioned with due respect. Phæax was not an imaginary voluptuary, drawn from the Odyssey, as he supposes, but a son of Erasistratus, who began public life with Alcibiades. Phæax, according to Plutarch, (*Life of Alcibiades*) had an easy persuasive manner of speaking in private conversation, but could not maintain a debate before the people; or as Eupolis said of him, he was an excellent talker but a most impotent orator, (λαλῶν ἀριστος, ἀδυνατωτάτος λεγῶν). The poet therefore laughs at the young coxcombs of Athens, as not knowing the difference between true oratory and a mere flow of words; and the satire is con-

veyed in the affected language of that class of men, whom he exposes with such admirable art in the following comedy of the Clouds. The dialogue called *Sophista*, in which Plato brings all his gigantic powers to bear upon the same pestilent race of men, with an apparent consciousness, that even those powers are almost unequal to the task of fully exposing their fallacious subtleties and specious deceptions, is conducted almost entirely in the same kind of phraseology. See also his dialogue called *Politicus*, and *Xen. Mem.* l. 3. c. 1. s. 6. That the spirit of the original might not be entirely lost, I have ventured to substitute some of the terms of the dramatic fops of Charles the Second's time.

He'll take them in their highest storm and buffetings,
And—stap my vitals—lay them in a moment.”

Agor. (*mimicking.*) A rape! a rape! thou'rt gone, thou'rt
lost—this phrase-maker

Hath ta'en thy very senses—split my wind-pipe!

Dem. Nay, they may bid farewell to law and act-making;
The woods* and fields offer more fit diversion—

There let them course and hunt, or force may drive them

Agor. Say you? by the same token then I gift you
With this trim folding †stool, and here's at hand
-A stout and well limb'd lad to bear it for you.

Dem. My heart o'erflows—old days return.

Agor. None will

Gainsay that speech, when I shall put a gift

Into thy hand, which thirty years will not

Wear out—what hoa, my lady †Truces, enter!

* The satire of Aristophanes is here, as in most other places, perfectly on the right side. The young men of Athens were gradually deserting the manly exercises of the field, for the effeminate pleasures of a town life, and for the public assemblies, in which they valued themselves on displaying a specious, false and foppish eloquence, in what manner and under what masters acquired, we shall

have occasion to see in the following comedy of the Clouds.

† It was customary for rich men at Athens to have a slave follow them with a stool of this kind, that they might rest themselves at pleasure. The avaricious man in Theophrastus saves himself this expense by carrying with him an old mantle for the purpose.

‡ Some females are here introduced characteristically habited

Dem. Why! what a world of charms is showered here!
 This lip might tempt me to a *thirty-years
 Salute!—those eyes—how cam'st thou by these beauties?
Agor. They were conceal'd within, and who but he,
 The cursed Paphlagonian, to hide them?
Take them and hie thee to the country instantly.

Dem. And how, meantime, shall fare the Paphlagonian?

Agor. This be his punishment—to exercise
 The trade I leave—dwell by the city-gates,
 Owning no fellowship nor soft communion—
 To ply—(and that by grace)—the trade of Sausage-vender—
 To make his olios—†dog-flesh enrich'd
 With asses meat—to know no sober moment—
 And when he's high in wine, to make a war
 Of words upon his graceless nymph-companions—

All early comedy is fond of allusions of this kind. In the French morality, *Le bien avisé et le mal avisé*, the present, past and future tenses of the verb *to reign*, figure as allegorical persons.

* Probably an allusion to the thirty years truce, which was to have preceded the Peloponnesian war.

† It was the custom, according to the Scholiast, for the lower

tradesmen to practise tricks of this kind and thus impose upon the unwary. It appears, however, from Hippocrates, unpalatable and even monstrous as such a dish may appear to us, that the flesh of asses, horses, dogs and foxes was eaten without any scruple in Greece. Dogs' flesh, according to Casaubon, was recommended by this great physician as particularly wholesome.

To thirst and slake his parching throat from streams;
Which first have visited the public baths—
Does this content, or shall worse treatment bide him?

Dem. Nay, I subscribe to this—on such society
His sword-tongue best is drawn—there let him battle—
(*to Agor.*) For thee—thy services deserve the Hall,
And seat which late install'd that worthless varlet.
Take you this robe ('tis green, and borrows name
From frogs) you are my debtor for it—follow me
And bear the same in hand—for Cleon, let now
His new pursuit see him in solemn act
Install'd, and garb'd as best befits his office;
'Twill satisfy the strangers whom his coarse
Affronts have long been wont to mortify.*

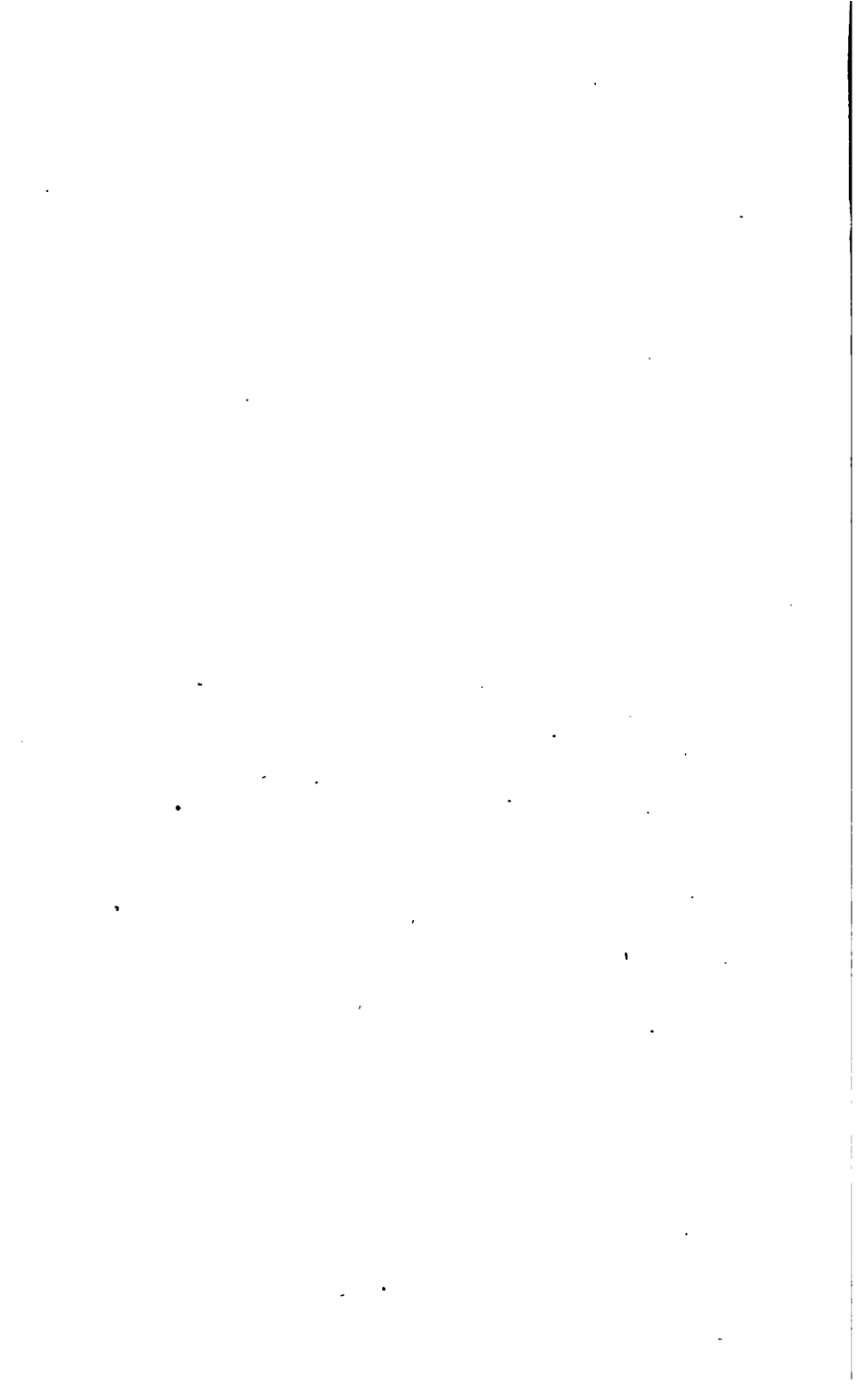
* Thus ends this singular play: a short remark from one of the most clear-sighted and virtuous of the poet's contemporaries will supersede the necessity of making any comments upon its tendency, or pointing out the lessons of political wisdom, which may be derived from it.—“That the populace should be partial to a democracy,” says the excellent Xenophon, “I can easily excuse; for it is pardonable that every person should try to benefit himself; but if any

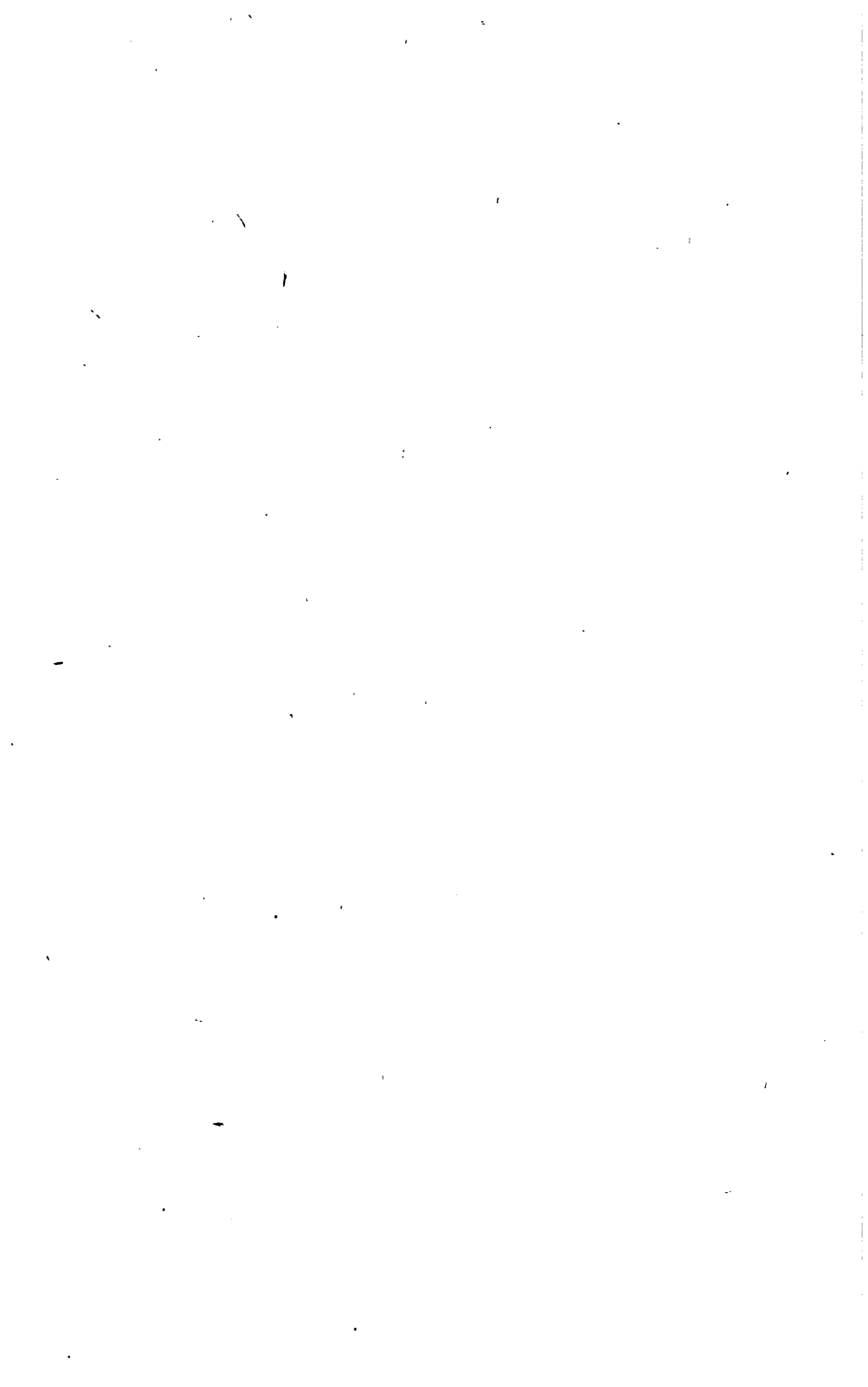
one, not immediately in the rank of the people, prefers living in a democratical rather than in an oligarchical government, that man is a villain by anticipation, and acts upon the consciousness, that it is easier to be a bad man and to escape detection in a state where the government is in the hands of the many, than it is in a state where the government is in the hands of the few.” *Xen. de Rep. Ath. c. ii. § 20.*

A procession—Cleon is carried in state in the full costume and with all the implements of his new profession—the CHORUS accompanying the pomp with a song, which unfortunately has not come down to us.

END OF VOL I.









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